

**TURKEY AND THE RESCUE OF JEWS DURING THE NAZI ERA:
A REAPPRAISAL OF TWO CASES;
GERMAN-JEWISH SCIENTISTS IN TURKEY
&
TURKISH JEWS IN OCCUPIED FRANCE**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2012

This study aims to investigate in depth two incidents that have been widely presented in literature as examples of the humanitarian and compassionate Turkish Republic lending her helping hand to Jewish people who had fallen into difficult, even life threatening, conditions under the racist policies of the Nazi German regime. The first incident involved recruiting more than one hundred Jewish scientists and skilled technical personnel from German-controlled Europe for the purpose of reforming outdated academia in Turkey. The second incident is the rescue of Jews of Turkish origin as well as those of non-Turkish origin from France during WWII. Both events were vociferously introduced for the first time in the early 1990s, within the discourse of the Quincentennial Foundation founded to commemorate the five hundredth year of immigration of Jews to the Ottoman Empire following their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

Our study shows that behind the Turkish recruitment of German-Jewish scholars, it was not humanitarian motives, but the interest of the Turkish state was the main and only motivation and the Jewishness of those scientists did not play any role in the decision of their employment.

The study also shows that the Turkish government did not appear to have shown any concrete intention to rescue its Jewish citizens in France who were under the threat of deportations, particularly in the last months of 1942. On the contrary, with mass denaturalization

policies, the government was reluctant to take back a sizable portion of its Jewish citizens in France. Only in December 1943, with the obvious defeat of Germany on the horizon and with the realization that only a small number of Jewish citizens would return, did the government give consent to their transportation to Turkey. The sources analyzed also do not confirm an unconventional or special altruistic act of the Turkish diplomats in France in relation to protecting or saving Jewish victims at that time.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AZO	American Zionist Organization
CGQJ	<i>Comissariat General aux Questions Juives</i> (General Commissariat for Jewish Affairs)
CUP	<i>Ittihat ve Terraki Cemiyeti</i> (Committee of Union and Progress)
CZA	Central Zionist Archives
FRUS	Publication -Foreign Relations of the United States
FO	British Foreign Office
HICEM	Hebrew Immigration Aid and Colonization Society
IGC	Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees
JA	Jewish Agency
JTA	Jewish Telegraphic Agency
LC	Library of Congress
MBF	<i>Miltarbefehlshaber in Frankeich</i> (German Military Command in France)
NARA	U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
OSE	<i>Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants</i> (Organization for Aid to Children)

PCO	British Palestine Consular Office
PRO	British Public Record Office
RSHA	<i>Reich</i> Security Main Office
SCAP	<i>Service de Controle des Administrateurs Provisoires</i>
SIPO-SD	<i>Sicherheitspolizei</i>
	(German Security Police and Security Service)
SP	Steinhardt Papers – Library of Congress
SSC	Stanford Shaw Collection
TCBA	<i>Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Arşivleri</i>
	(Turkish Republic Prime Minister’s Archives)
UGIF	<i>Union Générale des Israélites de France</i>
	(General Union of Israelites of France)
USHMM	U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
WJC	World Jewish Congress
WRB	War Refugee Board

PREFACE

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation advisor Professor Alexander Orbach for his valuable guidance during the course of this work. It was during my working as a teaching assistant for the course he taught on the Holocaust that I was inspired to do a study on Turkey's policies during the Holocaust. I would like to thank him for carefully reading my dissertation several times, for making to the point comments, for his constructive criticism, and correcting patiently my English. I would not have taken this long path as a second career and pursued M.A. and Ph.D studies without his constant support and encouragement as the Director of the Jewish Studies Program. I would also like to thank Professor Adam Shear for his guidance during my doctoral studies. My investigation of the fate of Jews of Turkish origin in France during the WWII first began within the scope of an independent study that I undertook and completed under his mentorship. From the early stages of the work, I benefited from his encouraging and stimulating comments and insightful suggestions. I would like to thank my thesis committee members, Drs. Emirlioğlu, Chilson and Drescher, as well for careful reading of my dissertation and useful comments. Last but not least I would like to express my deep admiration to my dear wife who has always been helpful and encouraging. This thesis would not have taken this final shape if it were not for many engaging discussions we had during the course

of this work. She continually inspired me with her intellectual curiosity, wise comments and challenging questions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On May 18, 2011, more than 250 viewers packed one of the movie theaters at the 64th Cannes Film Festival, exploding into excited applause at the ending of the “first documentary drama about the Holocaust, produced in a Muslim country.”¹ Standing for an extended ovation, some of these viewers were in tears.² With colorful cinematographic setup and dramatic effects, through convincing testimonies, the film described how Turkish diplomats rescued “hundreds of Jews in Nazi-occupied France” from a possible lethal destiny awaiting them during WWII. At that special gala night, the distinguished audience, comprised of diplomats from Turkey and Israel, members of the Jewish community on the French Riviera and Monaco, a few representatives from Turkish Jewry, and many festival goers were deeply moved with the sublime goals of the film, described eloquently by its director: “to show that human values must transcend all religious, ethnic and cultural divides, and pay homage to those brave individuals who did not allow themselves to stagnate in indifference and apathy in the face of the suffering of others.”³

¹ <http://www.projetaladin.org/en/en-passport.html>. *The Aladdin Project* was one of the sponsors of the screening of the film in Cannes. The Project is an independent, international non-governmental organization launched under the patronage of UNESCO in 2009. The goal of the institution is to counter Holocaust denial and trivialization, as well as to promote harmonious intercultural dialogue, particularly among Jews and Muslims. (Accessed Dec 24, 2011)

² Interview with the director Burak Arliel, *Reportare*, July 31, 2011.
http://reportare.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80:qthe-turkish-passportq&catid=58:t&Itemid=100 (Accessed Dec, 2011)

³ Ibid.

The Turkish Passport was not the first film on the striking story of the rescue of Turkish Jews living in France during the war years. *Desperate Hours*, filmed by an American producer ten years ago and frequently screened on different occasions for American Jewish organizations, also had a colorful description of protection and rescue efforts of Turkey and its diplomats of their fellow Jewish nationals in France at their most desperate time. Furthermore, in 2002 the rescue of Turkish Jews from German occupied France also became the subject matter of a novel written by a well-known Turkish novelist.⁴ In the novel, in spite of extreme danger, the main character, a young idealistic Turkish diplomat, risking arrest by the Gestapo, does not hesitate to hide a group of mostly non-Turkish origin Jews, supplying them with forged Turkish documents and making possible their travel to Turkey by a special train sent from Turkey. Interestingly, in the years following its Turkish publication, the novel was translated both into English and French, thereby gaining a wider international readership. It is possible to say that all these different works, through richly articulated discussions appearing in the media, organized events in which they were presented, and official Turkish references promoted in the popular consciousness and memory the establishment of a benevolent image of Turkey and its diplomats in regard to rescuing desperate Jews, particularly from German occupied France during WWII.

The rescue of Turkish Jews in France is not the only incident that stimulated creation of an image of helpless Jewish victims of the atrocious Nazi government and the humanitarian Turkish intervention that rescued them. The arrival of over one hundred German Jewish academicians and associated technicians dismissed from their posts in German controlled Europe to work in Turkish universities in 1930s was also presented as another example of the compassionate

⁴ Ayşe Kulin, *Nefes Nefese [Breathless]*. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2002).

initiative of Turkey to save suffering Jews from the injustices and cruelties of the Third Reich. Indeed, the first part of the movie *Desperate Hours* reflects how these Jewish scholars found a “safe haven in Turkey.”

Interestingly, the exposition of both of these Turkish humanitarian deeds in regard to saving Jews from the persecution and immoral policies of Nazi Germany appeared for the first time with much emphasis after more than fifty years, in the 1990s with the foundation of the Quincentennial Foundation.⁵ In fact, it was through the publications and rhetoric of the Foundation that these two deeds were first brought both to Turkish and international attention. In the discourse of the Foundation, the desire to create a link between these two affairs and Ottoman benevolence in accepting an important part of the dismissed Jews of Spain in 1492 and in the years following was quite conspicuous.

A talk given by U.S. House of Representatives member Stephen J. Solarz on September 17, 1990 illustrates how this rhetoric was adopted, found its ready adherents from the beginning, and was introduced as a well-founded and a certain, unquestionable fact:

... This tradition [embrace of Jews of Spanish expulsion and fleeing from pogroms] has continued into modern times, as demonstrated in 1935 by the invitation of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, to prominent German Jewish professors fleeing the scourge of Nazism. While most of the world turned its back on the Jews and condemned them to the horrors of the Nazi genocide, Turkey welcomed them much as they had in 1492.⁶

The newly emerged perception of seeing Turkey and the Ottoman Empire without distinction as equally benevolent in helping Jews who were in desperate conditions in another

⁵The *Quincentennial Foundation* was founded in 1989 with the aim of commemorating the five hundredth year of Spanish expulsion and Sephardic Jewish immigration to the Ottoman Empire. See p. 10.

⁶Stephen J. Solarz, “An Example To Mankind” in *United States of America Congressional Record-Proceedings and Debates of the 101st Congress, Second Session*. September 17, 1990, vol. 136, No. 114. Quoted in *Studies on Turkish-Jewish History: Political and Social Relations, Literature and Linguistics*, eds, David Altabé, Erhan Atay and Israel Katz. (New York: Sepher – Hermon Press, 1996), p. xviii.

part of the world is evident in the words of U.S. President George Bush in his message of May 17, 1992 on the occasion of the Eleventh Annual Turkish-American Day Parade: “Indeed, the Turkish people are to be commended for a tradition of welcoming refugees – be they Jews from Spain in 1492, or German Jews fleeing the Nazi regime in the 1930s.”⁷

In this study, our aim will be to investigate the true nature of the two specific affairs mentioned above—the taking in of German-Jewish academicians forced out of their academic posts by the Nazis and Turkey’s response to Turkish Jews stranded in France during WWII—and to see whether the protector and savior image of Turkey that was aggressively created after the 1990s vis-à-vis the Jews can be justified in light of archival sources.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The 1992 celebration of the quincentennial anniversary of the immigration of Spanish Jews to the Ottoman Empire generated a new wave of interest in the history of Ottoman and Turkish Jewry and became a popular topic among historians. Indeed, even a quick survey of the bibliography on the topic reveals that the number of studies published after the 1980s on Jewish presence in the Ottoman lands and Turkey showed a substantial increase compared to earlier decades.

For historians, it was a captivating theme, the analysis of a Jewish community that itself was an amalgam of so many divergent subgroups: Romaniot Jews who were the remnants of Byzantine Jewry, Ashkenazi Jews coming from different parts of both, Eastern and Western

⁷Ibid., p. xvii.

Europe, Karaite Jews from South Russia, and finally Sephardi Jews from the Iberian peninsula. The status of this Jewish community, which was more or less culturally unified in the eighteenth century as the Ottoman/Turkish Sephardic Jewry, was also unique and certainly very different from that of contemporary Jewish communities particularly in Europe. First of all, as subjects of an Islamic empire, they were in *dhimmi-zimmi* status. Broadly, this meant that their lives, their properties, and their religious practices were guaranteed in exchange for their acceptance of the supremacy of Islam and Muslims, and payment of a poll-tax, the *jizyah*. But, what made the Turkish Jewish community distinctive was the special features of the Empire. The Ottoman Empire was not a typical Islamic state. The Turkish state tradition was more liberal in the practice of Islamic Law-*Sharia* particularly in relation to non-Muslims. Predominantly, in the earlier centuries of the Empire, it was the secular and pragmatic sultanic edicts known as *kanun* rather than the rigid precepts of the Holy Law, *Sharia* that was the dominant factor in the administration. This implementation was actually a kind of continuation of the *töre -yasa* tradition that the Central Asian Mongol/Turkic polities had introduced in pre-Islamic centuries.⁸ Even in more recent centuries, in spite of increased Islamization of the Empire, the discriminatory restrictions laid down in the *dhimma* were rarely enforced as strictly as the provisions of the *Sharia* Law dictated, and open hostility from the Ottoman state or the Muslim population toward Jews remained infrequent.⁹

In contrast to the Christian - European states, where Jews were the only non-Christian community and their population was rather insignificant in numbers, in the Ottoman Empire,

⁸ Halil Inalcik, "Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation" in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans*, ed. Avigdor Levy, p. 7. See also Inalcik, *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adalet* [State, Law, Justice in the Ottomans]. (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2000), pp. 27-46.

⁹ Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 147.

Jews were not the sole religious minority. Together with the existence of Orthodox Christians (Greeks and Slavs) and Armenians, they were one of the three major non-Muslim *millets* of the Empire. As an important feature of the Empire, particularly in the *Rumeli*,¹⁰ the European parts of the Empire, and partly in northeastern Anatolia, the population of the Christian subjects of the Empire exceeded that of the Muslims.¹¹ In other words, the Turks/Muslims were the minority in these territories throughout Ottoman history. Indeed, census results of the early nineteenth century illustrate that in spite of incentives for conversion and settlement policies implemented for centuries, the European region of the Empire still remained densely Christian until the last days of the Empire.

Why it is so important to emphasize that there was a dominant Christian majority in the western territories of the Empire? This demographic feature is essential for understanding why it was a necessity, rather than a choice, for the Empire not to be coercive, but to be tolerant and pragmatic in its approach to its non-Muslim, especially Christian, subjects whose harmonious and eager participation in the Ottoman polity was crucial. Thus, the Ottoman state gave non-Muslim communities a wide measure of *de facto* autonomy and even accommodated their communal organizations into the formal structure of the state. Otherwise, it would not have been

¹⁰ Literally in Turkish, *Rumeli* means the lands of Romans/Greeks. In popular language and in official documents, it is the name of the territories of the Empire which lie within southeastern Europe.

¹¹ According to Ömer Lütfi Berkan, around the second decade of the sixteenth century, the non-Muslim population in the European section was about 4,123,215 as opposed to the Muslim population of 1,058,915. These numbers do not contain almost all of the Christian populated territories north of the Danube like Wallachia and Moldavia (today's Romania), and Serbia. Ö.L.Berkan, "Tarihi Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi" in *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, C.10, Y.1953, s.11. Quoted by Numan Elibol, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Nüfus Meselesi ve Demografi Araştırmaları [Population Issue and Demography Researchs on the Ottoman Empire]" in *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Y. 2007*, v.12, p.142. The results of the first official Ottoman census of 1841 illustrated that after three centuries, the considerable difference between the non-Muslim and Muslim populations still prevailed. According to the 1841 census results, in the whole European area of the Empire, there were 10,640,000 non-Muslims and 4,550,000 Muslims. Elibol, p. 154. As can be seen, according to these figures the non-Muslim population, which was mostly Christian, appears to be several times higher than the Muslim population. Only in the last decades of the nineteenth century with the territorial losses in the west, did the non-Muslim and Muslim populations come close to each other.

possible to govern an Empire whose composition was so ethnically, culturally and religiously heterogeneous.

Jews were the beneficiaries of this situation. In the diverse and pluralistic Ottoman society, they were less extraordinary. As one of the stones of the colorful Ottoman mosaic, they were not an uncommon, misfitting and even eccentric people as they were in the Christian world. Furthermore, given their neutral and apolitical character, Jews were regarded as a more reliable, loyal and accommodating potential pool of subjects who would enable the Empire to balance the demographic composition in those territories that were predominantly Christian. For example, in the wake of the conquest of Rhodes in 1523 and Cyprus in 1571, imperial orders were given for the transfer of Jews to these newly acquired provinces. In particular, the order given to the governor of *sanjak* of Safed to transfer 1000 wealthy Jews to Cyprus is well documented.¹²

In an economic sense also, with their competence in crafts, commerce and financial matters, as well as with their multi-lingual skills and international links, Jews were an ideal group to fill sectors of activity in which the Ottoman Turks would not actively engage. The conducting of these economic activities to the Empire's best interest by a group of people whose own interests were not threatening and whose reliability was not a concern was crucial for the Ottomans to sustain their hegemonial assertions against Christian Europe in areas other than military.

From its early days, the Empire always looked with suspicion upon its Christian subjects and tacitly distrusted their faithfulness, a suspicion that was sometimes well founded. The Ottomans were aware that their Christian subjects, due to their religious beliefs and ethnic

¹² Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 123.

origins, could have an affinity towards the western countries with which the Empire was constantly at war. In contrast, as Bernard Lewis emphasizes, “Jews were not subject to any such suspicion, and in certain situations – as for example, in the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – there was a marked preference for appointing Jews to sensitive positions.”¹³ The reference to Jews in the official terminology can be seen as an indicative example explicitly showing the Ottomans’ preferential attitude towards them. Although there was no difference between Christians and Jews in terms of their legal status, Christians were referred to as “*kefere*,” namely infidels, in the official documents, whereas Jews were simply referred to as “Jews.”¹⁴

The strategic policy of the Ottoman Empire to be tolerant to non-Muslim communities in general and the preferred treatment of Jews in particular found its reflections in historical works which presented Ottoman rule as considerate and caring vis-à-vis her Jewish subjects. The revitalization of the old Jewish belief of messianism in the years just after the traumatic Spanish expulsion of the fifteenth century could also be another factor that contributed to the creation of a highly praised and benevolent image of Ottoman rule, particularly in Jewish historiography. In contrast to the scarce Jewish creativity in the realm of history writing for centuries, there was a resurgence of short but exceptional history writing in the sixteenth century¹⁵ which attributed a divine role to the Ottoman Empire. The historians of that period, under messianic impulses, presented the Empire and Turks as Godly oriented people who would punish oppressive and torturing Christendom, and ultimately open the way for a glorious messianic age. As a

¹³ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁴ Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, (New York: New York University Press, 1991), p.77.

¹⁵ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 57-75.

consequence, in their works, Jewish life in the Empire was presented uncritically as if it were overwhelmingly peaceful and harmonious. This type of approach to the Ottoman Empire and her Jewry influenced later historians¹⁶ to a considerable extent and became pivotal alongside other factors in the creation and shaping of an overly pleasant, even mythic image of the Ottoman Empire and its Jewry, particularly in the common collective memory and consciousness of the Jewish world.¹⁷

Here, it is not our aim to speculate on the extent to which different factors have been influential in the emergence of the positive image of Ottoman rule with regard to her approach to Jewish subjects. What we want to emphasize is that, in spite of some criticism of the over praised and mythical exaltation of Ottoman rule and an “idyllic vision”¹⁸ of a highly pleasant image of Jewish life in the Empire, there is a broad consensus among historians that in the Ottoman state system there was no significant oppression or restrictions of Jews in their social, cultural and economic activities. In fact, as stated by Avigdor Levi “the lot of Ottoman Jewry was always closely interwoven with that of the Ottoman state.”¹⁹ Thus, when deterioration in conditions of the Jewish community began to surface in the eighteenth century, the declining administrative and economic order of the Empire was one of its major causes.²⁰

¹⁶ Heinrich Graetz, Simon Dubnow, Abraham Rosanes and Abraham Galante can be considered the most conspicuous examples of the later generation historians.

¹⁷ I. Izzet Bahar, *Jewish Historiography on the Ottoman Empire and its Jewry from the late Fifteenth Century to the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century*. (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2008), p. 155.

¹⁸ Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *The Jews of the Balkans, The Judeo-Spanish Community, 15th to 20th Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), p.8.

¹⁹ Avigdor Levy, *Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, p.71.

²⁰ Jacob Barnai, “From Sabbatianism to Modernization” in *Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries*, ed. Harvey E. Goldberg. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 79.

1.2 THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IMMIGRATION OF SPANISH JEWS TO THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In 1982, the idea of celebrating the quincentennial anniversary of the Jewish emigration from Spain first appeared in the weekly Turkish Jewish newspaper *Şalom*.²¹ Notably, the Ottoman Jewish press collections reflect that the four hundredth anniversary of the immigration was also celebrated with a special program in 1892. This commemoration was seen as an occasion to acknowledge the continuing gratitude and loyal feelings of Ottoman Jewry to the Sultan. The idea to celebrate the quincentennial year in an organized way gave rise to the Quincentennial Foundation in 1989 as a product of the initiative of a group of members of the Turkish Jewish community.²²

The intention of organizing a series of celebratory events to mark this anniversary received warm interest and encouragement from the Turkish government. Recommendations were made for the organization of programs on a wide, even sensational, scale that would attract the interest of the international community as well. Indeed, as can be seen, the declared main purposes of the Foundation at its inauguration in July 1989 went much beyond the commemoration or celebration of an event that happened five hundred years ago. The leaders of the initiative highlighted the following goals for their undertaking:

An example to Humanity
The main purposes of the Quincentennial Foundation

To remind the whole world, by all available means, [of] the high human qualities of the Turkish people as Nation and State;

²¹ Nesim Benbanaste, “Kim ölür-Kim kalır ama kutlanmağa değer [Who dies –Who survives, but it is worth celebrating]” in weekly newspaper, *Şalom*, July 28, 1982.

²² The Founding statute of the Foundation was published in the *Turkish Official Journal* no. 20226 of July, 19 1989.

To announce at home and abroad the humanitarian approach of the Turkish people to those who fled their land and chose Turkey²³ as their own home, in order to escape the uprise [upsurge] of bigotry and to safeguard their liberty of creed and beliefs, To help the Jewish citizens to express their gratitude to the Turkish Nation for this humanly act of five centuries ago.²⁴

A foreword written in 1996 by the Foundation's chairman, Jak V. Kamhi, to a publication of the Foundation illustrates that seven years after its establishment, the Foundation's mission was further enhanced, and even described as "sacred":

It is common knowledge that the Quincentennial Foundation has two main goals. The first one is to remind the whole world of the high human qualities of the Turkish people, to those who approached with goodwill, by showing what they did not know and confronting the malicious with historical facts. The second goal of the Foundation, was to assist the Jewish citizens of Turkey, who are now [an] inseparable part of the Turkish Nation, in expressing their gratitude for the humanly embrace that their ancestors encountered in the Turkish lands five centuries ago.

... We surpassed our goals and reached far, proved that the political pretention, those two different religions, i.e. Islam and Judaism, can never co-exist peacefully, because they were like fire and water, was wrong. That Moslems and Jews lived peacefully side by side for more than five centuries in Turkey and this harmonious co-existence was still going on today.

But most important of all, the Quincentennial Foundation countered the action of those who wanted to disrupt the peace among people and showed that the Moslem religion was not what they were trying to prove, but the symbol of respect for other beliefs and of unlimited love for humanity, as reflected by the attitude of the Turkish people. The Foundation will pursue its efforts to fulfill relentlessly this sacred mission.²⁵

²³ The use of "Turkey" instead of "the Ottoman Empire" needs special attention. In Turkish terminology, Turkey means only today's Turkish Republic. In daily language or in literature in Turkey, in Turkish or in any foreign language, it is never used to refer to the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ *The Quincentennial Foundation- A Retrospection...* (Istanbul: Published by the Quincentennial Foundation, 1995), p. 4.

²⁵ Jak V. Kamhi, "Foreword" in *The Quincentennial Foundation- A Retrospection...*, p. 3.

In the inaugural statement of the Foundation, and even more in Kamhi's rhetoric, it is possible to observe the efforts aimed at projecting an event that happened centuries ago in the Ottoman Empire onto the present day Turkish Republic (even to the Middle East).²⁶

The crucial point that needs to be emphasized here is the following: in contrast to the 1892 celebrations that were organized at a much more modest level and took place in the multiethnic and multicultural political system of the Ottoman Empire,²⁷ the quincentennial celebrations happened in a completely new political entity – the Turkish Republic. Is it correct to consider that both the Ottoman Empire and Turkey adopted a similar approach toward their Jewish people? In other words, is there any solid and unbroken continuity in the attitude of these two different political entities toward their Jews? According to the Foundation there was such continuity, and they had their own reasoning to support their views.

In the publications of the Foundation, we note that two incidents were presented rather intensively to show how Turkey saved Jews from persecutions twice in the problematic years of the twentieth century, reminiscent of what the Ottomans did centuries ago.²⁸ The first is Turkey's allegedly benevolent acceptance of Jewish immigrant scientists in the years before World War II; and the second, her diplomatic activities to help rescue the Jews trapped in Nazi controlled Europe, particularly Turkish Jews in France during the war years. In those publications, Turkish behavior in both of these incidents of the near past, was presented as the most recent example reflecting the high human qualities of the Turkish nation/people and were exalted as

²⁶ Kamhi's emphasis on the Muslim religion of the Turks and the harmonious co-existence of Jews and Muslims for centuries in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey is an allusion to the possibility of a peaceful relationship between Israel and the Arab World.

²⁷ Avram Galanti, *Türkler ve Yahudiler* [Turks and Jews]. (Istanbul: Gözlem Gazetecilik Basın ve Yayın A.Ş., 1995), p. 48.

²⁸ *Retrospection*, pp. 19-44, See also, *The Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews booklet*, pp. 40-43.

humanitarian acts that should serve as an example to all humankind. Thus, it might not be an overstatement to contend that the mission of the Quincentennial Foundation assumed political overtones from the beginning, for the purpose of uplifting the image of Turkey and the Turks in the international arena, particularly by referring to relatively recent events and the allegedly unbroken protective relationship taken by Turkish authorities to the Jews, rather than the commemoration of what happened in the far past. According to Rıfat Bali, the actual motive hidden in the background, setting the real agenda of the Foundation, was to neutralize the activities of the Greek and Armenian lobby against Turkey, particularly in the U.S.²⁹ Under the international political conditions of the time, regardless of much of its content, the discourse and activities of the Foundation were also supported by Israel, as they were presumably viewed as a means of reinforcing the political and strategic ties of Israel with Turkey.

1.3 REPERCUSSIONS FROM THE DISCOURSE OF THE FOUNDATION

In the years following 1992, the contentions first introduced or conveyed by the Foundation were widely disseminated. These arguments were adopted by the Turkish establishment and used on different occasions as the official discourse of the government. A talk given by Süleyman Demirel, the former president of Turkey, in 2006 in a meeting of the European University Association in Istanbul represents an illustration of the internalization of such rhetoric: “[The fact that] the newly founded [Istanbul] University was able to open its doors to an influx of a

²⁹ Rıfat Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945)* [A Turkification Adventure]. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p.15.

large number of Jewish professors at a time when European powers were rushing to appease Hitler is one of the proudest periods in our history.”³⁰ More importantly, the alleged humanitarian Turkish behavior with regard to these two incidents, acceptance of Jewish professors/scientists and rescue of Turkish Jews in Europe, became unquestioned, in the international community so that it became common practice to refer to these incidents in many public events or presentations concerning the Turkish Republic and its Jewry. A recent report presented by the Simon Wiesenthal Center is a good example demonstrating that such discourse is common even among those writers who harshly criticize present day Turkish policies:

During the Nazi era, Atatürk’s sympathies toward Turkish Jews extended to some Jewish victims of Hitler. For example, the Turkish Minister of Education was convinced by the association formed by Albert Einstein in Switzerland to help Jewish academics purged by the Nazis from German universities to hire 34 Jewish scientists in Turkish universities including Istanbul University. ... According to one estimate, the Turkish diplomats saved approximately 15,000 Turkish Jews in France.³¹

The *Courage to Care* award given by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)³² to the Turkish Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan in June 2005 reflects the acceptance by worldwide Jewry of this perception.³³ The talk given by Abraham H. Foxman, the ADL national director in the USA

³⁰ Quoted by Kader Konuk, “Eternal guests, mimics, and dönme: The place of German and Turkish Jews in modern Turkey” in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 37 (2007), p. 6.

³¹ Harold Backman, “From Ally to Nemesis: How Erdogan’s Islamists Hijacked Ataturk’s Nation and Put It on a Collision Course with Israel and the U.S.,” *Simon Wiesenthal Center*, October, 2001. In this short paragraph, there are a number of factual mistakes. Albert Einstein had no relationship with the association, *Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* formed in Switzerland by the expelled German scientists. Einstein was honorary president of the organization, *Union des Societes OSE* whose headquarters were in Paris. Besides, Turkey declined the job request made by Einstein for forty specialists and scholars, and his initiative did not lead to any positive result. See details in Chapter 2, pp. 84 –86.

³² *ADL- The Anti-Defamation League* was founded in 1913 “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” According to her mission statement, ADL fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights for all.

³³ Interestingly, in the current official web site of the ADL, although all the Courage To Care awards given each year are listed, the year 2005 is skipped. See http://www.adl.org/education/edu_holocaust/courage_to_care.asp (Accessed October 12, 2011).

and a Holocaust survivor, during the award ceremony shows how this well-known Jewish organization which sees itself as the “nation's premier civil rights/human relations agency” attributed a “savior” role to Turkey in relation to the Holocaust:

With the millions upon millions of words that have been written about the Holocaust, and about those who upheld the honor of humanity at a time when the word had become utterly grotesque, Turkey's role in the forefront of those few nations who provided refuge and rescue to the tragic Jews of Europe has been largely omitted or overlooked. While millions were murdered before the eyes of an indifferent world, Turkey was one of the tiny handful of nations who acted in the name of conscience and community.”³⁴

1.4 CRITICAL QUESTIONS

To what degree did Turkey provide refuge and rescue to Jews in Europe? Did Turkey really intend to save or to protect Jews from the racist policies and persecutions of the Nazi regime? What about the two incidents? Can we reconstruct the detailed sequence and real nature of events in light of the new documents that appeared very recently? Can we view this new data as compelling evidence in support of the humanitarian approach of the Turkish establishment towards the Jews of Europe as it is often presented? Or, does a more critical analysis of existing data reveal a different, if not conflicting, picture, with the one broadly publicized? These will be the main questions that we will propose to answer in the present study. We will focus, in particular, on the two specific incidents that allegedly attest to Turkey's assistance to the Jewish people who, as in the past, were once more in a difficult situation. In the historical rhetoric that

³⁴ Abraham H. Foxman, Courage To Care Award Ceremony, June 10, 2005. Online available at http://www.adl.org/PresRele/ASInt_13/4730_13.htm (Accessed October 12, 2011)

has emerged since 1992, these two events have been internalized in such a way that they now appear as indisputable facts, demonstrating the traditional humanitarian attitude of Turkey with regard to Jewish people in need of her help. The Turkish stance in each of these two cases has been described as compassionate, exemplary, intentional acts of benevolence “in the name of conscience and community” aiming to rescue Jewish people from the brutal Nazi regime.

Let us briefly remember these two incidents. The first is the immigration of more than one hundred scientists of Jewish origin from German-controlled Europe upon the invitation of the Turkish Government. Beginning in the spring of 1933, these scientists (who were all prominent leaders in their fields) were forced to quit their posts in academia because of racial laws issued by the Nazi regime. Turkey served as a shelter for them, and these academicians found opportunities to continue their work in the newly established universities of the young republic, far from the persecutions their fellow Jews endured in their homelands. The second incident was the protection and rescue of Jews of Turkish origin residing in France during the Second World War. In the early stages of the war, France was defeated and partially occupied by Germans. In unoccupied France a puppet government was established as a satellite regime under German control. There were approximately 12,000 Jews of Turkish origin living in France, at that time. The consent of Turkey, as a neutral country, to take these Jews under her diplomatic protection was of crucial importance for their escape from the Holocaust.

In the present study, we will investigate several issues that need to be explored critically with regard to the approach and policies of Turkish state agencies and officials toward these two incidents. We will analyze the wealth of documents and correspondence that shed light on different aspects and stages of these affairs and reconstruct the exact sequence of events, along with their causes and consequences. How did Turkey become involved in these events? What did

Turkey do in the course of the events, and what did she *not* do? Did the involvement of Turkish authorities engender any effect that could create a change in the course of events? Could Turkey have acted differently? More importantly, what were the basic motivations of Turkish authorities behind their involvement? To what extent were the actions of the Turkish authorities guided by humanitarian concerns?

Before delving into these questions and our core investigation, we have to search and reveal the fundamentals of the Turkish- Jewish relationship during the first fifteen years of the Republic which will serve as background to our journey of answering our main questions. What was the approach of the young Turkish Republic founded in 1923 on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, towards its Jewish citizens? Is it correct to think that there has been unbroken continuity between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in their policies toward their Jewish people? For example, is it reasonable to assume, in line with the view of Stephen J. Solarz, that there has been a consistent approach towards Jews continually adopted by both of these different political entities?

... Clearly, as the Quincentennial Foundation notes, the embrace of Spanish Jews by the Government and the people of the Ottoman Empire, and later, modern Turkey, is an ongoing demonstration of the highest ideals of human existence. Therefore I think it is quite fitting that the Quincentennial Foundation has adopted as its slogan “An Example to Mankind.”³⁵

³⁵ Stephen J. Solarz, “An Example To Mankind” in *United States of America Congressional Record-Proceedings and Debates of the 101st Congress, Second Session*. September 17, 1990, vol. 136, No. 114.

1.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCHOLARSHIP

Even a quick investigation reveals that the true objectives of the Quincentennial Foundation have hardly been analyzed in the existing literature.³⁶ But, more importantly, such a search also shows that the two events on which the discourse of the Foundation was based have not been subjected to a methodical and scrutinized investigation that would depend on proper use of archival sources. On the contrary, a new meaning has been attributed retrospectively to these events. In a sense, they have been conveniently misrepresented for the sake of serving a larger political agenda. As a consequence, a mythical historiography and an unrealistic and misguided public opinion became established with regard to these two events.

Stanford Shaw was the first historian who in collaboration with the Foundation presented the two incidents as examples of the humanitarian and compassionate behavior of the Turkish Republic towards Jewish people who had fallen into dire, even life threatening, conditions under the racist Nazi German regime. Having the confidence and respect of Turkish authorities, Shaw was one of the rare historians who was given permission to examine the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In our study, we observed that Shaw acted according to a pre-set purpose rather than an objective and critical analysis while handling and interpreting these documents. As we exposed in our study, the distorted meaning ascribed to some of these documents, the inaccurate translation of others from Turkish, and the chronologically disordered use of some documents, which appear to serve a certain agenda, makes his work, *Turkey &*

³⁶ Rifat Bali is the only historian who analyzed critically the establishment and the mission of the Quincentennial Foundation. See Bali, Devlet'in *Örnek Yurttaşları (1950-2003)* [The Exemplary Citizens of the State]. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), pp. 355-390.

Holocaust,³⁷ a source that should be approached with caution. Paradoxically, in the year of the publication of his book and articles on the subject, Shaw received favorable reviews and his works have been widely used as reference in the following years.

This study questions and shakes the veracity of the created and established protecting image of Turkey in relation to the Jewish victims of the Nazi era; an image that was first introduced in historiography by Shaw and articulated by his followers. To answer what really happened with regard to the two incidents, what role Turkey played, and what her intentions and policies were about Jews and their rescue in the Nazi era is the aim of this study. To accomplish this task, I searched various archives in Turkey, Israel, England and the U.S and made a thorough analysis of a large number of documents collected from these archives. Significantly, the time was ripe for such a critical and scholarly analysis of these two events; particularly, for analyzing the situation of Turkish Jews who were residing in France during WWII. Before 2010 there were a limited number of original Turkish documents in our hand available for a thorough evaluation of this subject. This was because the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives was practically closed to researchers. Indeed, in many historical works, we see complaints by Turkish or foreign historians about this implementation. However, in January and November 2010, a veteran Turkish diplomat, Bilal Şimşir, who was apparently in charge of organizing this Ministry archives published two books. In these two source books he presented about 400 original documents. These were all on the correspondence of the Turkish diplomatic delegation in France during the war years. These documents complemented the large number of similar documents at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum deposited by Stanford Shaw in 1995. Thus, all of a

³⁷ Stanford J. Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*. (New York: New York University Press, 1993)

sudden, in late 2010 our potential to evaluate the real character of events and policies in German-occupied France gained a new depth.

The present study is a re-appraisal of the story of the Turkish Jews in France and the nature of Turkish policies in relation to them. To accomplish our goal, we brought together documents from the archives of various countries as well as the above mentioned Turkish documents; we systematically and critically analyzed these documents, traced back the sequence of events in France during WWII, and examined secondary sources concerning the policies of the German and French regimes. The resulting reconstruction of the events and policies of the time according to our reappraisal came to be substantially different than the picture given by Shaw and his followers.

In our analysis of the Jews of Turkish origin in France, we made use of the works of Corinna (Corry) Guttstadt published in 2008³⁸. Guttstadt is the only historian whose articles and book challenged the popular perception in relevant historiography and literature. Documents that have been disclosed after 2008, and the critical analysis of the totality of the documents enabled us to put together a comprehensive account of the sequence of events and provide a clear, well-organized and complete picture of what happened to Jews of Turkish origin in France.

Our reconstruction of the Turkish attitude vis-à-vis German Jewish Scientists is also based on a series of critical documents recently released. These, including the letter written by Albert Einstein and the response sent by İnönü, then the Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic, were also de-classified with their attachments only in 2006. Again, the secret decree of 1938 which will be mentioned in Chapter 3 in relation to the ban of entry of Jews from German-

³⁸ Corinna (Corry) Guttstadt, *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust* (Berlin: Assoziation A, 2008).

controlled Europe to Turkey was also disclosed for the first time by Şimşir in November 2011, seventy years after its issuance.

In sum, a major contribution of the present study is to help correct the misleading accounts in historical writings as well as the inaccurate perception in world public opinion, concerning the involvement of Turkey in the rescue of Jews in Europe. The study will contribute to gaining a better understanding of the true character of the Turkish policies and attitude vis-à-vis the Jewish victims of the Nazi era. It also sheds light onto the little known aspects of the Holocaust history with regard to Turkey's position and policies as a neutral country during the War; and it brings to our attention the role of France and the U.S.A in the development of events that determined the fate of the Turkish Jews living in France during the war years. Finally, we expect the content of this study to be a driving force for initiating discussions of other events that remain to be established in the historical study of the Holocaust.

1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the wake of the 1992 quincennial activities, amid the increased general interest, Turkish policies towards her own Jewish citizens also became a topic of attention. However, in contrast to the study of the Ottoman policies, which have been mainly carried out by foreign historians, the Turkish policies toward her Jewish citizens have been a topic predominantly investigated by the historians within Turkey. Among them, Rıfat Bali is distinguished for his pioneering role. His work has made a major contribution to bringing this rather obscure or even “taboo” subject to daylight. Bali first edited a book written by an Israeli historian of Turkish origin, Avner

Levi,³⁹ in 1996. Beginning in 1999, Bali then published a series of books whose subject matter focused on the social life or experience of Jews under the Turkish Republic founded in 1923. Thanks to the critical and scholarly approach of Bali and other historians who followed in his footsteps, our knowledge of Turkey's approach towards non-Muslim communities, and particularly towards the Turkish Jews, has gained a new depth in the last decades. This deepened understanding also brought the possibility of reconstructing a balanced and factual representation of the Turkish policies in relation to religious minorities.

Before proceeding to our core investigation, as a starting point, we will look into how the Turkish State regarded her Jewish subjects/citizens, beginning with the early years of her foundation. We will thus focus in the first chapter on the policies adopted in the first fifteen years (1923-1938) of the new Republic in relation to her non-Muslim communities and in particular to the Jewish community. Actually, due to the separatist activities of the Christian communities in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and their supportive and cooperative relationship with the occupying Entente powers during the Turkish War for Independence, the presence of these communities was seen as undesirable by the young Republic. At the same time, in the last turbulent years of the Empire, there had been no incident that could possibly implicate Jewish subjects with treachery. Still, in the wake of the founding of the new Turkish state, against the reduced number and influence of the Christian minorities in social life and the economy, the visibility of Jewish minorities increased, and with their distinctive social and cultural characteristics, they began to attract much more attention as a foreign element in Turkish society. In fact, in the new establishment, concurrent to the rising political tendency of the period,

³⁹ Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler* [Jews in the Turkish Republic].(Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996). The original version of this book was published in Hebrew, in 1992.

nationalism was one of the main characteristics of the regime, and Jews like other non-Muslims, in contrast to various Muslim ethnic minorities of the country, were regarded as incompatible with the one homogenous and unified nation ideal that was envisioned by the founders of the Republic. Thus, in the first fifteen years of the Republic, the Turkification of different Muslim ethnic minorities and suppression of the presence and influence of Jews, as well as other non-Muslim communities, in every respect became one of the fundamental policies of the new regime. The information provided in the first chapter with regard to Turkish policies vis-à-vis her minorities, specifically Jews, will serve as background in the evaluation of the true character of the events to be explored and analyzed in succeeding chapters.

The German Jewish Scholars who had to leave their posts in their homeland due to the implementation of racist laws, and who had found the opportunity to earn a living and continue their academic work only in Turkey, will be the subject of our second chapter. These academicians, numbering more than 100, took on an important role in the Turkish government's university reform beginning in 1933 and made significant contributions to educate a new generation of Turkish scholars. Although they were regarded by the German Nazi regime as Jewish, it would be difficult to say that they had any noticeable traditional Jewish identities.⁴⁰ Their lifestyles and the absence of any relationship with Turkish Jews indeed suggest the opposite. With their typical European and German backgrounds, liberal values, mindset and behavioral habits, these scholars were representatives of the well-educated, highly acculturated, and thoroughly urbanized upper-class Weimar period German Jewry that disastrously disappeared under the racial policies of the Nazi regime during the Holocaust. To them, belief in

⁴⁰ I. Izzet Bahar, "German or Jewish, Humanity or Raison d'état: The German Scholars in Turkey, 1933-1952." *Shofar*, Volume 29, Number 1, Fall 2010.

individualism and the potential of human reason, which were the ideals of the German cultural “*Bildung*” concept, were more meaningful than any kind of religious dogmas and traditions. They were beyond Judaism or any other religion. In the eyes of the Turkish administration, they were not seen either as Jews or even Germans *per se*, but as representatives of European culture. Consequently, as the rhetoric of the period reflects, the Turkish approach was indifferent to the Jewish origins of these scholars, and the Turkish administration did not have any additional or hidden aims in recruiting them other than reforming the backward Turkish tertiary educational system. In fact, in the light of government’s explicit desire to reduce the influence and number of religious minorities in the country and the new instructions given to the Turkish diplomatic delegations in German-controlled Europe to decline all visa applications of Jews, including those in possession of valid visas for Syria and Palestine, it would be questionable, if not unrealistic, to attribute the recruitment of these scholars to a humanitarian pro-Jewish motive.

In the next part of the study, we will direct our attention to the fate of “foreign Jews” in German-controlled France. This subject has received considerable attention in recent years with the publication of new materials particularly in Turkey and was first introduced extensively by Stanford Shaw in *Turkey & the Holocaust*, published in 1993. Shaw presented the Turkish administration and her diplomatic delegation in France as being protective of all Jews of Turkish origin. He reported that most of the Turkish Jews had been saved from deportations due to Turkey’s caring attitude. In succeeding years, Shaw’s study became a reference book widely referred to in various publications. *Desperate Hours*, a movie produced and funded by Turkish organizations was also based to a great extent on Shaw’s accounts.⁴¹ A book published in 2007

⁴¹ http://www.lightmillennium.org/winter_02/desperate_hours.html

by Emir Kıvırcık about his grandfather Behiç Erkin, the Turkish ambassador in France between August 1939 and July 1943, also stressed that the ambassador did everything possible to save the Turkish Jews in France from deportation even when their Turkish origin was questionable.⁴² Most recently, a new movie entitled *The Turkish Passport* made its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on May 18, 2011.⁴³ This movie, closely related to our topic, is currently being introduced as “The only Holocaust Story with a Happy End” and will probably stir great public interest when it will be screened in theaters in the coming months.

As one of the neutral countries during WWII, Turkey's approach and policies with regard to the protection or return of her “regular” and “irregular” Jewish citizens residing in France were critical to the survival of this population of approximately 12,000 Jews. While many studies in the literature present the attitude of Turkey on this matter as selflessly protective both for Turkish Jews and for the properties they held, our examination of existing and newly disclosed documents (from Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; Turkish Prime Ministry Archives, Ankara; British National Archives, Kew; Laurence Steinhardt Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; Holocaust Museum, Washington D.C.) points to a more intricate succession of events, suggesting that the motivation for creating a caring and humanitarian image of Turkey, rather than objective criteria may have played a substantive role in spreading such a popular description of the course of events.

Using newly available documents, mostly of Turkish origin, we will reconstruct the events in chronological order and show how the real nature of Turkish attitudes in response to

⁴² Emir Kıvırcık, *Büyükelçi* [The Ambassador]. (Istanbul: GOA Basım Yayın ve Tanıtım, 2007) An English translation of the book was published by the same publisher in 2008.

⁴³ <http://www.theturkishpassport.com/> (Accessed in January 2011)

German insistence on deporting all Jews of Turkish origin differs to a great extent from the above noted presentations and invites a cautious approach to the widely popular discourse.

We will then examine the racist motivated economic measures implemented against Jews in France and the Turkish diplomatic efforts to ensure the exemption of Jews of Turkish origin from these measures. We will investigate how pervasive these interventions were, and examine their results, and analyze how effective these diplomatic efforts were in protecting the Jews of Turkish origin from the policies of French and German authorities.

Our findings here lead us to conclude that contrary to the existing pervasive representation in the literature, the emerging picture reveals that the Turkish government was generally reluctant to exert a special effort or to intervene with the Germans so as to protect the Jews of Turkish origin whom they categorized as “irregulars”, and who were treated by the German authorities as “stateless.” As we shall see, the inaccurate reports of U.S. Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt on the alleged rescue of irregular Turkish Jews apparently contributed substantially to creating this misleading view of this particular chapter of Holocaust historiography.

Having completed research on the Turkish approach towards Jewish German scientists and Jews of Turkish origin in France, we are now in position to look more closely and critically at the seemingly selfless and humanitarian self-representation of Turkey vis-à-vis Jews regarding the two incidents. In the first case, the investigation establishes that the Jewish identity of these academicians did not play any role in their recruitment, and to save those scholars from the German racial policies was simply not among the goals of the Turkish government. In the second case, in contrast to numerous publications, two films and official governmental rhetoric, critical analysis of documents now available reflects that Turkey and its diplomats were not excessively and altruistically protective towards Jews of Turkish origin in France during World War II.

While there were about 12,000 Jews of Turkish origin in France; only about 555 of them received Turkish visas to return and were transported to Turkey in ten organized convoys, the only secure mode of travel at that time. Furthermore, eight of these convoys were organized between February and May 1944, after it became certain that Nazi Germany would lose the war. We believe the present investigation and analysis of the fate of Turkish Jews in France sheds light on an important aspect of Turkish policies, helping us to understand their true nature vis-à-vis Jews during the Second World War.

2.0 TURKEY'S APPROACH TO MINORITIES, IN PARTICULAR TO THE JEWISH MINORITY, IN THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC

2.1 THE LEADERSHIP CHANGE IN NOVEMBER 1938

The death of Atatürk on November 10, 1938 and İsmet İnönü's selection as the second president of the young Turkish Republic was a critical turning point in Turkish history. Interestingly, although Atatürk knew that his illness was a terminal one and although he had a short will (mostly on financial matters), he had not assigned nor even hinted at a successor. On the other hand, his illness was not kept secret from the public. Starting from the end of 1937, there were circulating rumors about his health, and his illness was widely known, especially among the dignitaries and diplomats in Ankara. Thus, it is possible to say that, as is common with such leadership changes, conditions were ripe for the growth of political intrigue towards the end of Atatürk's life. However, in spite of all those factors, just one day after Atatürk's death, in a smooth transition, İnönü was proclaimed the new president of the republic.

İnönü's ascendance to the presidency by a high majority vote of the parliament and the non-existence of conspicuous frictions and political factionalism become more remarkable when we consider İnönü's unfavorable status at the time. Indeed, after being Atatürk's prime minister for more than twelve years, İnönü was forced to resign in September 1937, and became just a simple member of the parliament bereft of all his duties, ready to be forgotten in political

oblivion. According to Cemil Koçak, the smooth process of İnönü's coming to the presidency can be seen as a reflection of affinity and confidence among upper echelon Turkish politicians and administrators.⁴⁴ Seemingly, a tacit agreement took place among the high echelon of the state and played an important role in the election of İnönü as Atatürk's successor. Indeed, with his balanced and sober character and his well-known cautious attitude, İnönü, the closest companion of Atatürk, was generally regarded as Atatürk's complementary partner. Thus, both in the country and abroad, the transfer of power and office to İnönü was very well received. A report written by British Ambassador Sir Percy Loraine to London reflects the sentiments of the time:

The fact that the machine went on without a hitch after Atatürk's death showed how natural and acceptable the choice was to all solid elements in the country. In point of fact, the Atatürk - İnönü combination had been ideal for Turkey. Atatürk supplied the large ideas, İnönü made them practical, was moreover responsible for everything else, and ran Turkey down to its smallest details. Atatürk's brain worked brilliantly for a few hours out of twenty four and was then submerged; but İsmet's brain if necessary, worked all twenty four hours. Atatürk was the more compulsive of the two; he was capable of calling a man fool, and a few hours later, kissing him. But after İnönü considered a man fool or a knave, there was never any subsequent osculation. The people knew İsmet's record and felt safe in his hands. They knew that İsmet had run the country to a great extent before Atatürk's death, and he would now carry on the lines he had already laid down.⁴⁵

The wide consensus in support of İnönü's presidency and the lack of even feeble opposition gave İnönü from the beginning, the opportunity to rule the country with absolute authority. Indeed, just after his coming to power, in December 26, 1938, President İnönü's title

⁴⁴ Cemil Koçak, *Türkiye'de Milli Şef Dönemi* [The National Chief Era in Turkey]. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p. 142.

⁴⁵ FO (British Foreign Office Documents) 371/E547/132/44 from Selim Deringil, *Turkish Foreign Policy During the Second World War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 47.

was embellished with a new designation: “*Milli Şef (National Chief)*.”⁴⁶ In the face of existing titles such as *Il Duce* or *Der Führer* and strengthening nationalistic waves spreading all over Europe, the new title of *Milli Şef* actually did not sound strange. For some time, a disturbing tension in Europe was increasing at a spiraling pace, and the expectation of an imminent war which would change political balances was gaining strength. Turkey, with its strategic position, could not be outside the developing value scheme of world politics. In fact, in the years after its foundation, Turkey was influenced by evolving nationalist sentiments and ideologies gaining strength in almost all of Europe and their effects on world politics.⁴⁷ While she never had had a typical buildup of bourgeois and elitist intellectuals in the past, she seemed much more receptive to the new absolutist ideas gaining ground in the West.

In addition to the international turbulent climate, Turkey had her own historical background, distinctive internal conditions and impulses and, more importantly, her nationalist drives. All these factors were decisive in conditioning her policies, beginning with the first days of İnönü’s presidency throughout the Second World War period. In this study, we will focus on the pre-1938 policies of the country which drove her nationalist trajectory. An analysis of Turkey’s approach to its minorities, in particular to its Jewish minority, Jewish immigrants and Jews in general, during İnönü’s presidency after November 1938 and throughout the Second World War can be seen as extensions of those established in the previous era.

⁴⁶ This title was given to İnönü unanimously in the first convention of country’s only party after his election to the presidency. Koçak, *Türkiye’de Milli Şef Dönemi*, p.164-173.

⁴⁷ Fritz Neumark, who was among the German scholars finding asylum in Turkey during the Nazi regime, describes in his memoirs not only the fanatical nationalist Nazi regime but also how nationalist and avenging sentiments were dominant in Britain in pre-war years. See Fritz Neumark, *Boğaziçine Sığınanlar* [Those Who Took Shelter in Bosphorus], (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 1982) pp. 25-26.

The official motto describing the first fifteen years of the newly founded republic can be summarized in broad outlines with one of the well-known sayings of Atatürk: “*Peace at home, peace in the universe.*” Any examination of the period necessitates a critical assessment of how much this dictum actually reflects both the intentions and politics of the period. Clearly, as mentioned above, the evolving intellectual and political nationalism and the changing political dynamics all over Europe had their impact on Turkish policy makers, administrative cadres and intelligentsia. In addition to its influence on internal politics, the emergence of a new power balance in Europe created, on the one hand, new opportunities for Turkey to adopt more demanding strategies in its foreign policy, but, on the other, urged the country to pursue a cautious statesmanship and to give importance to establishing dependable alliances for her security in the midst of increasing aggression, particularly in the Mediterranean basin and in east Europe, adjacent to the Balkans.

We focus below on Turkey’s internal politics, Atatürk’s “peace at home,” and in particular, on the policy of Turkification, which from a social, cultural, and economic point of view, dominated the internal political affairs of the state during this period.

2.2 PEACE AT HOME

2.2.1 Ideology of Turkism

The emergence of Turkey as an independent country at the end of the First World War is one of the most legendary episodes of modern history. It demonstrates how a nation could awaken under the guidance of an extraordinarily talented and determined leader, abolish all plans dictated by world powers, and gain its independence in spite of extremely dire conditions. After an arduous struggle on different fronts, including the diplomatic front, the new republic became a sovereign entity on the Anatolian peninsula, and its small extension in Europe, Thrace, the lands where the Ottoman Empire was born, began to grow.

The new nation considered itself founded on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire as a newly nascent entity. However, nothing in history emerges abruptly from nowhere; in contrast to some official nationalistic historical presentations, there is always a continuum in history. Indeed, the ruling elite of the new state were actually from the leading military and administrative cadre of the Empire. Thus, the dominant ideas, ideologies and strategies of the last period of the Empire also found new avenues in the new establishment. In particular, Turkism, one of the core doctrines of the Empire before its dissolution, found fertile ground in the young republic with its tilted and more focused fatherland-centric transformation.

The ideology of “Turkism,”⁴⁸ a powerful political movement in the Ottoman Empire, emerged after 1909⁴⁹ as a reaction to the failed multi-national and multi-denominational concept of Ottomanism.⁵⁰ In the early years of the nineteenth century, in parallel to the new nationalist stirring in Europe, the Empire also began to face nationalistic separatist sentiments and movements. First, the Serbs revolted and gained their autonomy in 1830. Then, the Greek uprising took place. The latter was more problematic for the Empire and concluded in 1830 with an independent Greek state. In each of these nationalist revolts, the European interference with claims to protect their co-religionists created discomfort for the Empire. The Empire felt the necessity to reshape Ottoman polity by introducing a new theory of Ottomanism which redefined the Empire as a polity where all Muslim and non-Muslim subjects had equal rights. Also, the Empire promised its non-Muslim subjects more roles in governmental and administrative institutions.

The new reform policy of the Empire was proclaimed through two Imperial edicts. The first known as *Tanzimat Fermani* was issued in 1839, and the second, *Islahat Fermani*, an enhanced form of the first, was issued in 1856. In these two edicts, against the promise of increasing the individual rights of its non-Muslim subjects, the state curtailed their autonomous structure with intentions to control the separatist movements. Thus, these edicts would practically terminate the traditional *Millet* System.

⁴⁸ Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, among the Turkish people in the Ottoman Empire, there was no consciousness of a Turkish national identity. The latter emerged under European influence. Before that, the word Turk had even a pejorative connotation. See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 333. See also section 7.2 in Conclusion Chapter.

⁴⁹ In 1909, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) dethroned Sultan Abdulhamit and became the sole power in the Empire.

⁵⁰ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 218.

However, the new theory of Ottomanism, the reform promises and the centralization of the Ottoman administration did not help in ending the disintegration of the Empire. These new policies did not change the aspirations of the separatists, neither did they create a new form of Ottoman patriotism among the ethnically and religiously different subjects of the Empire as desired. Furthermore, the Empire could not either succeed in stopping the ongoing interventions of the Great Powers to her internal policies with the pretext to protect the non-Muslim communities. More importantly, the Ottomanist reforms that were supposed to give additional rights to minorities, failed in the long run.

Beginning in 1909, the *Young Turks* and their political organization *İttihat ve Terakki* (Committee of Union and Progress-CUP) realized that all distinct peoples of the Empire such as Arabs, Albanians, Greeks, Armenians, and many others could not be amalgamated to form a single and united entity with a common aspiration. Indeed, the ongoing separatist and nationalist movements in the Balkans, the disastrous outcome of the Balkan wars in 1912, resulting in miserable refugee convoys of Turkish ethnic people, and the Arab revolt of 1917 show how their concerns were justified. The conviction that it would be impossible to conciliate different national interests and attain a unified empire provoked the CUP, to turn strongly toward Turkish nationalism.⁵¹

In the newly founded republic, this time, the governing elite of the new republic, under the weight of their dismal past experiences, in a shrunken homeland that they could hardly hold, embraced the elements of Turkism more firmly. According to the more determinedly adopted nationalistic policies, Turkey would be the nation of people of Turkish ethnicity who were seen

⁵¹ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 289.

as the genuine and ancient people of the country.⁵² Even an official historical doctrine emerged which defined both the Sumerians and the Hittites as the ancestors of the Turkish people.⁵³ The completely “new idea—that of Turkey—the land of Turks” was difficult to absorb even by the people who had “so long [been] accustomed [to] religious and dynastic loyalties.”⁵⁴ In harmony with the nationalist ideology, Turkish pride and self-respect were indoctrinated through a massive campaign and re-education program.⁵⁵ To the citizens of the Turkish nation, Turkish contributions to past civilizations were introduced as merits to be glorified. Turks were expected to be proud of themselves as noble people. Under this somewhat xenophobic dictum, all people other than those of Turkish ethnicity were regarded as suspicious and as foreign elements. They had to be absorbed within the Turkish majority. In 1925, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, stated this official policy quite clearly: “We are frankly nationalists ... and nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. In the face of a Turkish majority other elements have no kind of influence. We must *turkify the inhabitants of our land at any price, and we will annihilate those who oppose the Turks or ‘le Turquisme’*”⁵⁶ By the same token, with intentions to populate the country with more ethnic Turks, as another aspect of nationalist policies alongside Turkification, the immigration of Turkish ethnics to the country was facilitated by offering land and special concessions to them.⁵⁷

⁵² In such “tilted and motherland-centric” form, the Turkism ideology of the newly established republic was quite different than the ideology that existed in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Championed by Enver Pasha, the ideology of those years aimed at uniting all Turkic ethnicities from the Balkans to Central Asia under one flag.

⁵³ Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.427.

⁵⁴ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 353.

⁵⁵ Metin Tamkoç, *The Warrior Diplomats- Guardians of the National Security and Modernization of Turkey*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1976), p. 99.

⁵⁶ Bilal Simsir, *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye’de “Kürt Sorunu,”* Quoted by Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey’s Kurdish Question*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), p. 10. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁵⁷ The governmental decrees regulating the emigration of Turkish pedigrees were numerous. They can be listed according to their dates as: 4/11/1921, 7/12/1923, 20/3/1927, 6/9/1932. Source Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivleri [Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Archives] TCBA – 010.18.31.02.88.91.10.

2.2.2 Minorities of Different Ethnicities

In the early 1920s, the demographic character of Turkey was far from being homogenous. Other than non-Muslim religious minorities, i.e., Greeks, Armenians and Jews,⁵⁸ there were also numerous groups that were all Muslim in religion but ethnically dissimilar. In order to meld those diverse Muslim ethnic groups together, most of whom had roots in the lands where they had lived for centuries, the description of Turkish ethnicity was kept wide enough to encompass all diverse ethnic backgrounds.⁵⁹ In return, different Muslim ethnic minorities were expected to relinquish their ethnic identities and not only integrate into, but embrace, Turkish identity without objection. Recep Peker, the general secretary of the Republic People's Party (CHP) explained the ethnic policy of the administration towards different ethnicities in his talk of October 1931:

In today's Turkish political and social society, we deem all citizens who have been inculcated with the identities of Kurds, Circassians or even Laz and Pomak, as the same as ourselves. It is our duty to correct these wrong beliefs, which were inherited from the dark, despotic ages of the past and the products of long historical conflicts, with compassion. Today's scientific realities do not permit us to imagine a detached [ethnic] nation with a population of five, ten or a few hundred thousand or even a million.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ The Lausanne Treaty recognized only Orthodox Greeks, Christian Armenians and Jews as the three non-Muslim religious communities of the country. Assyrians, a community having very old roots in the southeast Anatolia and Syria, formed another distinct religious minority of the young republic. However, since the Lausanne Treaty did not refer to them specifically as a religious minority, in the Turkish administrative and legal system, they were not considered as a separate distinct religious community.

⁵⁹ Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları* [Capital Tax and Turkification Policies]. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları), pp. 62-66.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.63. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

However, implementation of policies of Turkification did not go smoothly, particularly in Southeastern Turkey where there was a high population of Muslims of Kurdish ethnicity. Kurds were seen as a kind of “mountain Turks” by Ankara, in spite of their historically older presence in Anatolia compared to Turkish ethnic tribes who migrated later.⁶¹ They revolted 25 times against the civic and ethno-cultural pressures imposed upon them during the first 14 years of the republic.⁶² Among these Kurdish rebellions, the uprising in 1925 was the most widespread and seriously threatened the internal security of the newly established state. Although in the rhetoric of its leader Şeyh Sait, the opposition was against the secular policies of the new regime, which was described as “godless,”⁶³ in the background, the existing pressure on Kurdish ethnic identity was the actual, deep-seated social cause of resentment. Gavin D. Brockett, points to both religious/cultural and ethnic factors as the two causes of the Kurdish uprising:

Kurdish leaders publicly may have emphasized their opposition to secular reform, but their success at mobilizing a viable Kurdish force depended equally on a shared ethnic identity from which emerged a shared sense of grievance at Kemalist efforts at Turkification.⁶⁴

⁶¹ The main migration of Turkic people to Anatolia commenced after 1071, with the triumph of Sultan Alp Arslan of the Seljuk Empire against the Byzantine Empire. On the other hand, according to the official Turkish Historical thesis that had been initiated with the encouragement of Atatürk in the 30's; the Turkic people, who founded a brilliant Neolithic civilization in Inner Eurasia, were forced to emigrate in all directions due to climate changes and founded the first civilizations in the Americas, China, the Near East and Europe, by transmitting their superior culture to wherever they went. In accordance to this pseudo-scientific theory, “nearly all different ethnic groups in Turkey should be identified as “potential Turks,” or Turks who needed to be reminded of their ancestry.” See Ilker Aytürk, “The Racist Critics of Atatürk and Kemalism, from the 1930s to the 1960s.” in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2011 46: 330.

⁶² Mehmet Ali Birand, “Bugüne Kadar Kaç Kürt İsyanı Oldu? [How many Kurdish Revolts occurred to date?]" in *Hürriyet* –Turkish daily newspaper, January, 3, 2008. Birand's source was a veteran officer who apparently did his research using military archives.

⁶³ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 266.

⁶⁴ Gavin D. Brockett, “Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923-38” in *Turkey Before and After Atatürk* ed. by Sylvia Kedourie, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), p. 52.

2.2.3 Religious Minorities

Nation building was differently implemented on religious minorities. By default, the definition of Turkish identity excluded all who were not of Muslim religion. Tamkoç, in explaining the fundamental characteristics of the political beliefs held by the Turkish citizens, underlines this strong *sine qua non* bond between the sense of Turkish identity and religion:

The individual regards himself first and foremost as a Turk, endowed with special qualities, powers, and obligations to protect and preserve the motherland and the Turkish polity. Almost equal in importance, however, is his belief in himself as a Moslem, which to his way of thinking is very nearly synonymous with the word Turk.⁶⁵

Thus, the Turkification policy that applied to ethnic minorities which was essentially based on not recognizing or ignoring differences and implementing assimilation policies, was not applicable to non-Muslims. In fact, for a typical Turk, non-Muslims were regarded as strangers (*yabancılar*) or even identified as foreigners (*gavurlar*) who were “exploiting the human and national resources of their homeland.”⁶⁶ Hence, as stated by Tamkoç, with a strong sense of self-identity and particularly with the need for security, “a deep-rooted distrust and cynicism ... toward strangers and foreigners in particular permeated the thinking of the individual citizen.”⁶⁷ Tamkoç’s description of non-Muslims perceived as foreigners or outsiders in the Turkish individual’s mindset also had its reflection in the official thinking of the Turkish administration. G. Howland Shaw, the *Chargé d’Affaires* of the American Embassy in Turkey between the years 1921-1936, mentioned this way of thinking in his report to the State Department. Accordingly,

⁶⁵ Tamkoç, p. 106.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

“anybody who is not a Moslem cannot be a real Turk” was “a deep-seated instinct” prevalent in the official Turkish attitude and played “a part of unpredictable importance.”⁶⁸

On the other hand, from the political point of view, the freedom of religious minorities to observe their religion, to preserve their religious and cultural traditions, and to maintain their religious institutional structure was under the protection of the Lausanne Peace Treaty.⁶⁹ Thus, any large scale campaign against religious minorities might cause international consequences since such policies were under the close surveillance of the Western World. The existence of a group of people who would attract steady foreign interest or even solicit international interference was undesirable and viewed by the Turkish administration as a nuisance. Protection of the rights of a group of Turkish nationals by a foreign authority was also an insult to Turkish dignity and Turkish understanding of full sovereignty. Indeed, the founders of the state were well aware of the fact that in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, the high percentage of non-Muslim population (more than the 25%)⁷⁰ always served as a pretext for the Western Powers and Russia to intervene in the politics of the Empire. İnönü’s remarks, put forth persistently in different forms during the tough disputes of the Lausanne Conference, reflect such anxieties of the new establishment and its desire for absolute sovereignty, free from any measure of foreign control over internal affairs:

Turkey was acutely sensitive on this matter, and her fears were unfortunately well-founded. For up to the present day, Turkish sovereignty had always been

⁶⁸ G. Howland Shaw’s Report of December 27, 1932. Sent by Charles H. Sherill, American Ambassador in Turkey to the State Department, in *The First Ten Years of the Turkish Republic Through the Reports of American Diplomats*. Prepared and annotated by Rifat N. Bali. (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009), p. 115.

⁶⁹ The international agreement that recognizes Turkey as a sovereign country was signed in Lausanne after a negotiation period of more than 8 months. It was İsmet İnönü, the head of the Turkish delegation, who signed the Treaty on July, 1923 on behalf of the Turkish Government.

⁷⁰ Based on the last four, i.e., 1883, 1897, 1908 and 1914 Official Ottoman Census Reports. The percentage is calculated as an average of the census data. For census results see Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic*, Appendix I, Table I, p. 273.

infringed on the plea of humanitarian considerations. The integrity of Turkey had frequently been guaranteed by means of promises from the highest authorities and also by solemn treaties, and yet Turkish sovereignty had repeatedly been violated.⁷¹

Moreover, the affinity of minorities in Istanbul with the Allied Powers during the period of foreign occupation and particularly the cooperation of the Greek minority with the invading Greek army in Western Anatolia in the years following the First World War were still very vivid memories.

The overwhelming dominance of religious minorities in the economic realm of the country was another factor disturbing the Turkish administration. Since religious minorities were not deemed true loyal citizens, but rather aliens, their disproportionate share in the economic activities of the state was regarded as a threat to the economic independence of the country.⁷² Thus, according to the new establishment, the role of minorities in trade and industry should be contained and they should be replaced by Turkish-Muslim entrepreneurs. In the eyes of the governing elites, the minorities were benefiting from the resources and advantages of the country to the detriment of the Muslim majority, who, in spite of being the real owners of the country, lived in the poorest conditions mostly in rural areas as agricultural peasants.

⁷¹ Great Britain, Turkey no. I (1923). Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923. Cmd. 1814, p.219. Quoted by Tamkoç, p. 172.

⁷² Atatürk's opening talk of the first Turkish Economic Conference in February 1923 in Izmir reflects how the establishment of a national economy was seen as pivotal: "For full sovereignty, there are two principles: National sovereignty must be empowered by the economic sovereignty. ... However great the political and military victories, if they are not crowned by economic victories, then, the achieved accomplishments would be short-lived and would fade away in a short time." Celal Bayar, "Yeni Devletin Karşılaştığı Ekonomik Meseleler – Milli Ekonominin Kuruluşu ve Geliştirilmesi Çabaları [The Economic Problems Encountered by the New Nation– The Foundation and Development Endeavors of the National Economy]," in *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, May 2001, no: 52, p. 12. Interestingly, businessmen from the religious minorities were not invited to the Izmir Economic Conference (Izmir İktisat Kongresi). The lack of representation of minorities at this highly significant first economic congress of the newly established republic draws attention to the exclusion or distancing of the minorities from the economic realm intentions/policies of the governing elites.

A deliberate policy to minimize the influence of religious minorities by every means appeared as soon as an independent Turkish entity began to take shape. Actually, the policies to diminish the number of minorities, to reduce their communal effectiveness by resettling them, and to weaken their influence, particularly in the economic realm, had already been the principles of the Ottoman policy since the first decades of the nineteenth century. The same policies, but this time in a more determined and straight forward manner, began to be implemented even before the official proclamation of independence in October 1923, and continued throughout the period on which we are focused. In accordance with these policies, the Christian and Jewish populations were either forced or encouraged to emigrate, or compelled to leave their centuries old hometowns scattered all over the country and resettle in the main centers—preferably Istanbul. Furthermore, with direct intervention of the state in the economy, and through newly issued discriminatory laws, participation of Christians and Jews in trade and industry was widely curtailed.⁷³ By the same token, the administration encouraged the dismissal of non-Muslim employees from governmental institutions and pressured private companies to hire more Muslims, even if their skills and abilities were unsatisfactory.⁷⁴

The change of the demographic base in Anatolia in the last 70 years also had an important impact on the relationship between the Muslim and non-Muslim people of the peninsula. As a result of the rapid Ottoman dissolution that began in the last decades of the

⁷³ Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi*, p. 57-58.

⁷⁴ A law issued on March 18, 1926 stipulated the conditions that were required to be a civil servant. According to the first provision, “to be a Turk” was the first condition. Aktar claims that the law was issued with intentions of ethnic discrimination since in its wording not “to be a Turkish citizen” but “to be a Turk” was used as the first requirement to be fulfilled by a candidate. On the other hand, the constitution of 1924 was clear in defining who is a Turk: “Without distinction of religion and ethnicity, in terms of citizenship, all people living in Turkey [are] entitled as Turk.” However, in actual implementation, in an absolute fashion, only Muslims were seen as Turkish, and non-Muslims were discriminated against in every realm. See Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni [1923-1945]*, pp. 211-214.

nineteenth century, more and more Turkish/Muslim emigrants fleeing miserable conditions in the lost Western territories took refuge in Anatolia, the core land of the Empire. Moreover, from the mid-1850s onward, with the Russian expansion southward (to the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and along the shores of Black Sea) Anatolia also became the final refuge for a high number of Tatars from the Crimea and Circassians from the Caucasus.⁷⁵ These newcomer Muslims and their children were accepted as Turks according to the idea that Muslim equals Turk.⁷⁶ The well-established, centuries old non-Muslim communities, with their different socio-religious cultural life and with their domination of the country's economy were not only a source of resentment or envy for these newcomers, but also a hindrance to the realization of their economic ambitions.

2.2.3.1 The Greek Minority

Around 1910, among the non-Muslim religious minorities, Orthodox Greeks had the highest population, and like other minorities, were highly dispersed both in Anatolian and Thracian *vilayets*.⁷⁷ Due to the unending Greek-Ottoman/Turkish conflicts of the last hundred years and the Greek aspiration of *Megali Idea*, i.e., the unification of Hellenic people on both sides of the Aegean Sea, the Greeks were regarded as the most dangerous minority from the point of view of

⁷⁵ Ahmet Akagündüz presents the total number of refugees from Balkans and the island of Crete at around 1,260,000 and, from the Crimea and Caucasia about 4,000,000 for the years between 1854 and 1914. See Akagündüz, "Migration to and from Turkey, 1783-1960: types, numbers and ethno-religious dimensions," in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 24, no. 1, p. 98-99. These immigrant numbers imply that an important percentage of the 8,846,340 male Muslims of the 1908 census, or their children, were immigrants. See Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 117.

⁷⁶ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 357.

⁷⁷ Based on official Ottoman census reports, Shaw establishes that there were 1,792,206 Greeks, 1,294,851 Armenians and 187,073 Jews in 1914, in the Ottoman Empire. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, p.273. Nergis Canefe, using the 1911-1912 Ottoman census results, claims that there were altogether about 3 million non-Muslims in Anatolia. As the non-Muslim population was 404,768 according to 1927 Republic census, it seems that in the 14 years between 1914 and 1927, there was more than a 2.600.000 non-Muslim emigration from what is present day Turkey. See Canefe, "The Legacy of Forced Migrations in Modern Turkish Society: Remembrance of the Things Past?" in *Balkanologie*, Vol. V, No. 1-2, Dec 2001.

national security. Indeed, in the wake of World War I, with the approval of the Entente Powers, in May 1919, Greece landed a force on the Aegean port of Izmir with much fanfare by the local Greeks and with their enthusiastic support and collaboration, the Greek army began to invade Western Anatolia.

The agreement reached with Greece on January 30, 1923 in Lausanne in the wake of the War for Independence gave Turkey the chance to get rid of the remaining Greek ethnic population in the country except in Istanbul and two Aegean islands, Imros (Imvros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos) by an exchange of populations. The agreement gave a formal/official opportunity both to Turkey and Greece to buttress the homogenous and nationalist structure of their states by swapping their Greek and Turkish populations. In fact, since 1912, with the rise of inimical sentiments nourished by the after effects of the Balkan War, there was already a stepping up of Greek emigration both to the islands in the Aegean Sea and to mainland Greece.⁷⁸ This emigration turned out to be a desperate flight of several hundred thousand in the last weeks of August and first weeks of September 1922, with the final victories of the Turkish army against Greece and with their entrance to Izmir. In the last weeks of October 1922, amid similar panic and chaos, the Greek communities of the Thracian region were also obliged to leave their homes for Greece alongside the withdrawing Greek army.⁷⁹ Finally, after May 1923 in accordance with the terms of the Exchange of People Agreement, the rest of the Greek populace was sent to Greece, leaving Turkey, except Istanbul, Greek-free. In total, during these years approximately

⁷⁸ Aktar, *Türk Milliyetçiliği*, p.111.

⁷⁹ Lord Kinross describes the scene with his colorful style: “Here the Greek population was trekking westwards across the plains, whole families tramping, laden with trunks, beside ox-drawn wagons piled with household goods, while their flocks trooped before them and at night their camp-fires dotted the earth like stars in the sky.” Lord Kinross, *Atatürk the Rebirth of a Nation*. (Nicosia: K.Rustem & Brother, 1971), p. 338.

1.200.000 Greek ethnic people were obliged to leave Turkey in exchange for 400.000 people of Turkish ethnicity from Greece.

The population exchange was ruthless. For the individuals from both sides, the emigration was not proposed as an alternative choice but as a compulsory act with which to comply without objection. For example, among the Greek people transferred, there were many mid-Anatolian, Karaman Greeks whose only language was Turkish. On the other hand, there were a significant number of supposedly Turkish ethnic people reluctant to leave Greece for Turkey. For example, a group of Sabbateans in Salonika claimed that they were not Turkish in origin and resisted their compulsory transfer, but they did not succeed in convincing the Greek authorities.⁸⁰ As Bernard Lewis notes, Western social and national classification norms might even regard the exchange as “no repatriation at all, but two deportations into exile of Christian Turks to Greece and of Muslim Greeks to Turkey.”⁸¹ A report written by the American Red Cross representative in Greece reflects the dramatic individual dimension of the population exchange; “The population exchange that is proposed in Lausanne is nonsense. The Turks that live in Greece insist to stay here. Conversely, the desire of the Greek immigrants who came to Greece is to go back to Turkey in the shortest time.”⁸² The importance of the proportional weight of the exchanged people can be better appreciated if we consider in the years just before the compulsory exchange, the population of Turkey was only thirteen million and of Greece not more than four and half million.

⁸⁰ See Vakit Gazetesi- Vakit Newspaper, January, 4 1924. See also Suphi Nuri, “Cumhuriyet, Dönemlik ve Rumluk” in *Ileri Gazetesi- Ileri Newspaper*, January, 5 1924. Both quoted by Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dönemler Tarihi* [History of Donmes]. Turkish. (Ankara: Rehber Yayıncılık, 1990), p. 495, 489.

⁸¹ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 355.

⁸² Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Greece, document no. 868.48/342. Referred by Aktar, *Türk Milliyetçiliği*, p. 144.

In June 1932, a new law extensively limited the ability of Greeks from Istanbul who had been exempted from the exchange of population to work in many professions.⁸³ As a consequence, once more, a new emigration wave stirred, and in the summer of 1934 many of the Greek inhabitants of Istanbul were obliged to leave the country. Thus, the Greek population which was about 1.250.000 in the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century diminished to 17.642 in 14 years as the census of 1935 demonstrates.

2.2.3.2 The Armenian Minority

In the last decades of the Empire, due to the rebellious activities of the Armenian nationalists, friction between the Ottoman Administration and its Armenian subjects was very common. The bloody occupation of the Ottoman Bank by an Armenian separatist organization in August 1896 to force the government for concessions, and the assassination attempt against Sultan Abdülhamit II in July 1905 were the most notorious activities among many others. In the critical first years of the First World War, the Administration's fears about the loyalty of the Armenians were further exacerbated by the close relationship of militant Armenian organizations with the Empire's archenemy, Russia. The fact that most of the Armenian population was living in territories close to the Russian border was creating a security concern for the government. In April 1915, the chaotic conditions of the ongoing war all over Europe and the evaporation of Western protection of the Christian minorities gave the top Ottoman administration the opportunity to act with a free hand. With orders given from Istanbul, almost all the Armenian communities of the Eastern part of Turkey, who had been living there since the Armenian

⁸³ Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi*, p. 120.

civilization of antiquity, were forced to emigrate to regions near Syria, presumably the more secure southern parts of the Empire. This deportation was done under the most primitive, brutal and atrocious conditions, causing the death of hundreds of thousands and tragic suffering of all these Armenian people. Moreover, concurrently, although in much fewer numbers, deportations were carried out from other parts of Anatolia, even from Istanbul. As a result of all these deportations and the emigration that succeeded them, the Armenian minority which was once more than 1.300.000⁸⁴ was drastically reduced. The census results of the first years of the new Turkish Republic show an Armenian population of 77.453 in all of the country.⁸⁵

During the negotiations of the Lausanne Conference, with aspirations to becoming a homogenous state, the Ankara government also considered exchanging the remaining population of the Anatolian Armenians with the Turkish ethnic people in Armenia which was part of the Soviet Russia. However, İnönü, the head of the Turkish delegation in Lausanne, out of considerations not to jeopardize the peace agreement that had just been signed with the Soviet Russia in March 1921, avoided discussing the issue with the Russians.⁸⁶ On the other hand, after the Turkish victory of September 1922 and during the population exchange period with Greece, an important number of Armenians were also chosen to go to Greece with the Anatolian Greeks. Atatürk's speech in March 1923 in Adana, a southern city where there was once a considerable Armenian population, reflects the new regime's approach to religious minorities in general and

⁸⁴ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, p. 205. There are conflicting numbers in relation with the Armenian population of the Empire on the eve of World War I. Howard M. Sachar presents this number as 1.8 million. Sachar points out that the number of Armenians died during the deportations could be as high as 1,396,000. Howard M. Sachar, *Farewell Espana*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 197.

⁸⁵ Fuat Dündar, *Türkiye Nüfus Sayımlarında Azınlıklar*- [The Minorities in Turkish Census]. (Istanbul: Doz-Basin Yayın Ltd., 1999), p. 159.

⁸⁶ M. Çağatay Okutan, *Tek Parti Döneminde Azınlık Politikaları* [Minority Policies during the Single Party Era]. (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), p. 72.

to Armenians specifically: “The Armenians do not have any right in this fertile country. The country is yours, belongs to Turks. In the past this country has been Turkish, therefore it is Turkish now and will be Turkish forever. ... The Armenians and *et cetera* do not have rights here.”⁸⁷ During the early years of the republic, the Armenian minority who still lived in Turkey was confronted with nationalist and discriminatory policies. For example, according to a letter written by the American ambassador in Ankara in spring 1934, the Armenian communities living in rural areas in mid-Anatolia were forced to leave their homelands to go to Istanbul.⁸⁸ In the first fifteen years of the Republic, due to the discriminatory policies of the government there was a continuous Armenian immigration to Europe and the U.S. Indeed, the results of the second census of the republic show that the Armenian population, which was 77.433 in the first census of 1927, decreased further by about 41% and was only 45.765 in 1935.⁸⁹ According to Yusuf Halaçoğlu, the former president of the Turkish Historical Society, or TTK, these numbers do not reflect the actual population. He and some other historians assert that even now there are an important number of incognito Armenians, particularly in eastern Anatolia who continue to live “under their Sunni-Muslim or Kurdish-Alawite identities, and define themselves ethnically as Armenians.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ “A Talk with Adana Artisans,” *Hakimiyeti Milliye*, (Newspaper) March 21, 1923. Quoted by Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni*, p. 234. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar. Although, here, there is an insinuation for other than Armenians, it is not clear to whom the term *et cetera* refers to.

⁸⁸ Letter of March 2, 1934. Sent from U.S. Ambassador, Robert P. Skinner to State Department. Presented by Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi*, p. 93.

⁸⁹ Dündar, p. 168.

⁹⁰ Vercihan Ziflioğlu, “Hidden Armenians in Turkey Expose their Identities” in *Hürriyet Daily News*, June 24, 2011.

2.3 THE JEWISH MINORITY

2.3.1. Ottoman's Favorable Approach to its Jewish Minority

Under Ottoman rule, Jews as one of the *millets* that composed the Empire, in contrast to their co-religionists in Christendom, lived in relatively peaceful conditions for centuries. With its multiethnic and multireligious composition, the Empire was an asylum for these Jews. From the Ottoman perspective, behavior towards Jews was dictated by the self-interest of the Empire.⁹¹ For the Ottomans, the Jews with their skills and links to international trade, expertise in important industries, talents in administration, and their ability to introduce “the techniques of European capitalism, banking, and even the mercantilist concept of a state economy,”⁹² were “an ideal group for settlement in the area.”⁹³ Indeed, the Jewish contribution was one of the elements that elevated the Empire’s economy to stand out against the developed economies of the Western world. More importantly, in contrast to the indigenous Christian population of the conquered lands, Jews were seen as a more trustworthy, loyal and accommodating minority. Obviously, the absence of any established Jewish social and political center or entity that could threaten Ottoman interests or security was the main reason for the Ottoman confidence in their Jewish subjects.⁹⁴ Bernard Lewis underlines this favorable approach:

⁹¹ Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry – A History of the Judeo – Spanish Community, 14th-20th Centuries*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 200), p. 2.

⁹² Halil İnalçık, “Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation” in *Jews, Turk, Ottomans- A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, p. 11.

⁹³ Halil İnalçık, “Jews in the Ottoman Economy and Finances, 1450-1500” in *Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis: The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times* ed. By C.E. Bosworth, Charles Isawi, et al. (Princeton: The Daewin Press, 1988), p. 513.

⁹⁴ Daniel Goffman, “Jews in Early Modern Ottoman Commerce” in *Jews, Turk, Ottomans- A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, p. 17.

With Christian dhimmis, there was always the suspicion of at least sympathizing with the Christian enemy- a suspicion that was sometimes well founded. Jews were not subject to any such suspicion, and in certain situations ... there was a marked preference for Jews in sensitive positions.⁹⁵

The reference to Jews in official terminology can be seen as another explicit example of the preferential Ottoman attitude towards Jews. In all official documents, all ethnic and religious minorities of the Empire were referred to as “*kefere*,” namely infidels, whereas Jews were simply referred to as “Jews.”⁹⁶

For the Christian population of the Empire who were the primary subjects of the Christian polities before the Ottoman conquests, to be in an equal legal position with respect to Jews was an unpleasant situation. Furthermore, the Ottoman’s discernible preferential attitude towards its Jewish subjects further exacerbated the already existing historical hostility of Christians with new sentiments of rivalry. Indeed, from the early days of the Ottoman conquests up to the very last days of the Empire, there was a fierce competition between Jewish and Christian subjects of the Empire to gain higher shares from the Empire’s economy and to have superior and influential positions in its politics. A comment on a sixteenth century *response* of Rabbi Samuel De Medina from Salonika is an interesting description of the existing rivalry:

... A feeling of distrust, however, seems to have prevailed between Jews and Christians on their business relations. The feeling was based on experiences in which Jewish money was illegally appropriated by Christian merchants. This unfriendliness is reflected in the halakhic decisions of De Medina... The Greek residents in Salonika were a constant source of irritation to the Jews, because they resented the dominant control by Jews of Turkish commerce and industry. The affluence of some Jews called forth the envy and hostility of the Greek residents.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, p. 61.

⁹⁶ Avigdor Levy, p. 28.

⁹⁷ Morris S. Goodblatt, D.H.L., *Jewish Life in Turkey in the XVI th. Century as Reflected in the Legal Writings of Samuel D. Medina* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1952), pp. 123-125.

In the eyes of the Greeks and Armenians, Jews were seen as an unreliable, pro-Turkish community. They were considered to be a hindrance or even danger for Christian interests and aspirations. Concomitantly, in addition to the classical, theologically based, centuries-old hostile image, the negative “other” and “collaborator” perception of Jews⁹⁸ prevailed consciously or sub-consciously in Ottoman Christian minds and became instrumental in the persistence of a constant hostile Jewish-Greek/Armenian relationship within the Ottoman Empire. Beginning in the early years of the sixteenth century up to the last days of the Empire, accusations of ritual murder surfaced periodically in the Empire. These blood libel cases can be seen as a typical outburst of local Christian rivalry and hostility. In most cases, the central Ottoman Government or local authorities interfered with these false accusations and protected the Jews of the Empire from the aggressive attacks of Greek and Armenian assailants.

Throughout history, the fate of Ottoman Jewry was always closely interwoven with that of the Ottoman state. During the long decline and dissolution period, the Jews suffered and felt the repercussions of diminishing Ottoman power more than any other major community of the Empire. In particular, whenever the central government authority was abolished, and national movements by different ethnic/religious groups took place against the Ottomans, Jews underwent the same horrors as did the Muslim population. For example, in the 1820s, during the Greek uprising, age-old Jewish residents of the region, consistent with their long-established image, were again regarded as “collaborators” with Ottoman power and massacred by the Greeks in the same brutal manner as were the Muslim people. Indeed, in the first decades of the nineteenth

⁹⁸ In the sixteenth century, during the prevailing Ottoman victories, as reflected by Martin Luther’s writings, the belief that “the Jews favored the Turks and were assisting them against Christians” was a common prevalent conviction shared in the whole of Christendom. See Mark U. Edwards, Jr. “Against the Jews” in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict*, ed. Jeremy Cohen, (New York: New York University Press, 1991), p. 367.

century, during the troublesome retreat of Ottomans from the Balkans, like the ethnic Turks of the Balkans, Jews also suffered from atrocities inflicted by local Christian people and were obliged to leave their homelands and flee to safer Ottoman territories. By the same token, during the occupation period of Istanbul by the Entente Powers, or that of the Aegean region by the Greeks, Jews seldom joined the public demonstrations in favor of the occupiers or engaged in treacherous activities against the Turks as did the indigenous Christians. Quite the opposite, Jews also suffered from the invading Greek army just as their Turkish Muslim neighbors did. Indeed, according to the reports sent by the director of the Alliance school to Parisian headquarters in the summer of 1919, during the occupation of the West Anatolian cities by Greek troops, the local Greeks attacked their Jewish neighbors, plundered their shops, and tortured notables of the Jewish communities in these cities.⁹⁹

2.3.2 The Republic's Approach to its Jewish Minority

The rather favorable and more or less peaceful relationship between Turks and Jews in the Ottoman Empire came to a breaking point with the establishment of the new Turkish Republic. While the size of the Jewish community was far undersized in comparison to the Christian population and even though Jews were regarded as loyal to Turkish welfare, their existence was nevertheless at odds with the state's national aspiration to become a homogenous entity. A briefing to the executive session of the national assembly by Rıza Nur, the negotiator on religious minority issues at the Lausanne Conference, on March 2, 1923, about six months before

⁹⁹ Henri Nahum, *Izmir Yahudileri* [Izmir Jews]. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), p. 184.

the establishment of the state, reflects the sentiments and intentions of the Ankara Government towards its minorities:

In [Lausanne] we accepted the exchange of people. It would be compulsory. There would be no more [religious] minorities in Anatolia. Only Istanbul would be exceptional. (Voices; Armenians) But comrades how many Armenians are there? (Voices; Jews) There are thirty thousand Jews in Istanbul. Those were the people who never created a problem up to now. (Noises) Jews as is known, are people who go wherever you take them. *Of course I say it would be better if they are not present.*¹⁰⁰

In fact, the actual discriminatory policy against Jews began to reveal itself in the aftermath of the sweep up of the Greek armies out of Anatolia with the final Turkish victory of September 1922. The Turkish authorities saw the flight of the bulk of the Jewish people from inner Aegean cities like Aydın, Denizli and Nazilli during the anarchic Greek occupation period of the region¹⁰¹ as an opportunity for the cleansing of these cities from religious minorities. The Jewish communities, who had roots in those cities extending back several centuries, were not permitted to return to their homeland from Izmir where they had been sheltered.¹⁰² Instead, they were obliged to stay in extreme, miserable, and chaotic conditions in Izmir which was in flames because of an arson started just a few days after its recapture by the Turkish army. A ban on Jews living in certain parts of the country and a forced settlement was something that Jews had never experienced on such a scale during the last centuries of Ottoman history.¹⁰³ Within one year, a

¹⁰⁰ Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi*, p. 41-42. Translation and emphasis by I. I. Bahar.

¹⁰¹ Nahum, p. 191.

¹⁰² Avner Levi, p. 15, 57. Levi claims that the number of old Jewish residents of these cities that were affected by this policy as about 15.000.

¹⁰³ All four censuses that were done between 1894 and 1914 in Aydın Province (Aydın, Bergama, Menemen, Manisa and Denizli) show a steady Jewish population in the region. A comparison of the population of the province according to 1914 and 1927 census results reflects the elimination of Jews from the region. The total Jewish population of 35,041 in 1914 is reduced to only 280. 278 were living in Manisa and 2 in Denizli. See Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, p. 277 and Dündar, p. 158-159.

similar expulsion was implemented in a small town in Thrace, and Jews were again forced to leave Çatalca.¹⁰⁴

The Turkification policies and discriminatory attitudes that appeared in the very first years of the Republic continued to affect Jewish communities in changing intensities throughout the years before the Second World War. An analysis of the press in this period reflects how Jews were held in contempt and shown as self-seeking, alien people, even harmful to the welfare of the nation. The first anti-Jewish publications appeared in the last months of 1922 in newspapers such as *Tasvir-i Efkar* and *İleri*, and because such a harsh, debasing tone against Jews was a completely new phenomenon, its appearance created much annoyance and reaction in the Jewish community.¹⁰⁵

Interestingly, in the contemporary press, with the already nearly completed campaigns against the Greeks and the Armenians and their comparatively reduced population, it was the Jews who frequently came to the forefront with the image “*gavur*,” the other, untrustworthy or infidel, and became the main target of these nationalist outbursts. Debasing of Jews and questioning their loyalty to the country became a common and frequent theme in the press. The image that Jews were alien to Turkish national aspirations and did not participate actively in efforts to develop the country became a theme widely elaborated in the newspapers and journals of those years. It is worth remembering that the press at this time was only semi-independent and

¹⁰⁴ *The Jewish Chronicle*, December 7, 1923, “Expulsion of Jews from Thrace”, p. 18. According to Ayşe Hür, the order for expulsion was also given for Çatalca, a village in Trachia but annulled later with the application of the Chief Rabbinate. Ayşe Hür, “Bu topraklarda gayrimuslim düşmalığının köklerinin ne kadar derinde olduğunu biliyorum- [I know how deep the roots of anti-Muslim enmity in these lands]” in *Taraf*- daily newspaper, January 24, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Levi, p. 24-26.

that there was strong government control over it.¹⁰⁶ Thus, it will not be a mistake to think that the publications of the period reflected the intentions and attitudes of the policy makers in Ankara. Indeed, in this period of limited democracy and a one party regime, it was not possible for the press to publish without the consent of the government.¹⁰⁷ In fact, in the first decades of the Republic, with the nonexistence of other media, newspapers were the only media power instrumental in the formation of public opinion. For the administration, the daily press was an effective tool with which to promulgate and explain governmental policies and approaches, two crucial tasks in the process of nation building.

A close examination of the attitude of the press in covering several problematic events, which happened in relation to Turkish Jews, reveals a similar pattern of publicizing news and simultaneously commenting on it. The report, subsequently not verified that three hundred Turkish Jews sent a telegraph to Spain in October 1925 from Izmir and Istanbul to declare their loyalty was one of these events.¹⁰⁸ The anti-Jewish campaign on this matter and the accusation of disloyalty to the country in the press began and ended in an orchestrated fashion. News about the incident appeared in the four main newspapers, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Vakit* and *İkdam* for the first time on the same day, February 18, 1926.¹⁰⁹ In the following days a fierce anti-Jewish campaign was carried out by well-known columnists of the press. One of the columnists,

¹⁰⁶ Koçak, “Second World War and the Turkish Press” in *Geçmişiniz Itinayla Temizlenir* [Your Past is Washed with Care]. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), p. 353-369.

¹⁰⁷ The two laws, i.e., Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu of March 1925 and Matbuat Kanunu of 1931 gave wide authority to the government to control and limit publications. Using the provisions of these two laws, the authorities had unrestricted power to decide to collect published material or to close newspapers or journals with an unspecified cause such as “not being in compliance to the country’s policies.” See O. Murat Güvenir, *2. Dünya Savaşında Türk Basını* [The Turkish Press During the World War II]. (İstanbul: Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1991), p. 39-45.

¹⁰⁸ It was claimed that these telegraphs were sent on the occasion of celebrations of Christopher Columbus’ discovery of the American continent in Spain. In spite of requests, copies of these telegraphs that could be easily bring out through an official investigation in the post offices of Izmir and Istanbul never appeared. See Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni*, p. 80.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Necmettin Sadak, accused those Jews who had signed those alleged telegraphs with treason and proposed that they should be expatriated if they could not be hanged.¹¹⁰ In the following week of the incident, a committee representing the Turkish Jewish Community visited Ankara, and after a short period of negotiations, as will be explained below, agreed to renounce their civil rights recognized by the Lausanne Treaty. Interestingly, with the announcement of this decision by the Minister of the Interior Affairs on February 28, the press changed its attitude, and the slander campaign about the telegraphs died away in newspapers at the same time.¹¹¹ The press campaign initiated after the funeral of Elza Niyego is another salient example. In August 1927, a seemingly insane middle-aged married Muslim man with a reputable family background murdered Niyego, a 23 year old Jewish girl, due to her indifference to his affections.¹¹² In the wake of the incident, the keeping of the corpse on the street for many hours and the sentencing of the murderer to a mental hospital instead of to a prison created indignation in the Jewish community. With elevated sentiments, Niyego's funeral attracted many protesters and emotional demonstrations.¹¹³ In this case also, the critical reactions and accusations of the newspapers against Jews commenced in a chorus within a few days concurrent to the changed position of the administration and arrest of some of the protesters. The coverage of the event and related comments in the press diminished dramatically with the release of the accused protesters.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ *Akşam*, Turkish daily news-paper, February 25, 1926. Quoted by Bali, *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹² Avner Levi, p. 75.

¹¹³ "We want Justice," "Coward Turks," and "Barbars-Savage people" were a few of the slogans that were voiced during the demonstrations. Bali claims that the high intensity of the protest was an outburst of tensions that has been accumulated in the Jewish community because of the pressures of the Turkification policy. See Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni*, p. 111. This event remained to be the only public protest act of Turkish Jewish community in its history.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

In all these examples and similar incidents with allusions to the Spanish expulsion, the newspapers presented the event as another act of ingratitude by Jews without much scrutiny. Articles and columns questioned their attachment to the Turkish nation, and accused them of being self-seeking people whose trustworthiness and loyalty was doubtful. Their non-proficiency in the Turkish language and their use of Ladino in their daily life attracted much criticism among newspaper commentators, and offered as evidence for their reluctance to become sincere members of the Turkish nation.

Preventing the establishment of a strong centralized rabbinical authority and functioning administration associated with the rabbinate represents one of the official governmental policies discriminating against the Jewish minority. From the beginning, the government decisively curtailed the effective functioning of the administration of the Jewish community by containing the authority of the Chief Rabbinate and the Secular Advisory Committee that was acting on his behalf on civil issues. In fact, for a long time, the Jewish communal administration did not have an officially recognized legal status. Moreover, in spite of several drafts proposed, the government was reluctant to accredit the establishment of a new organizational order to regulate the legal status of the Chief Rabbinate and his administration. With anxiety stemming from the negative experiences with the Greek and Armenian patriarchs in the last period of the Empire, the government was particularly determined to avoid a Jewish community administration that would seem autonomous. As noted, under pressure, in May 1925, representatives of the Jewish community declared their decision to relinquish civic rights that had been recognized by the Lausanne Treaty. Referring to an American source, Bali claims that the committee's decision was not taken after long discussions, but rather as a result of the implicit force imposed on them

by the state using the press for that purpose.¹¹⁵ In consecutive years, as a consequence of its reduced authority, the chief rabbinate faced severe economic problems that further deteriorated its leadership capacity. In August 1931, Rabbi Haim Becerano, who had been acting as the chief rabbi of Turkey since 1920, died. After Rabbi Becerano's death, due to concerns about the non-ratified and vague status of the internal administration, community leaders refrained from choosing a new chief rabbi. For more than two decades, the community did not have an officially recognized chief rabbi to represent its existence.

Because of their high level of education, knowledge of foreign languages, and experience, Jews benefited economically the most from the departure of the Christian minorities. This benefit was contrary to aspirations of the Republic's founders. They were hoping that the emerging vacuum, with all its promising opportunities, would be filled by Muslim Turkish entrepreneurs so that a nationalization of the economy would be accomplished. The success of the Jews in taking over the economic role of the Greek and Armenian emigrants especially so in the Aegean and Thrace, created considerable displeasure.¹¹⁶ The enhanced visibility of the Jews, which aggravated public annoyance with them, elicited further harsh criticisms and campaigns against Jews in the newspapers. In fact, although the capital of the young Republic was Ankara, a dull town in mid-Anatolia, the economic center was still Istanbul. With a comparatively unchanged population structure there, religious minorities of the city still dominated most of the economic activities of the state. The founders were well aware that true political sovereignty could be possible only with full control of economic activities. From the founders' perspective, this control could be achieved only by excluding minorities from a significant economic role and

¹¹⁵ Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni*, p. 65.

¹¹⁶ Okutan, p. 222.

replacing them with Turkish Muslims, even if they were not competent. Through newly issued laws and regulations, the authorities forced, and even threatened with closure, companies owned by minorities as well as by foreign institutions. The authorities pressured them to dismiss their non-Muslim employees and hire Muslims in their place. Along with other minorities, Jews were pushed from their posts in trade unions and barred from newly established commercial organizations.¹¹⁷

Turkification of economic institutions and practices also brought new discriminatory economic limitations on professionals such as lawyers, pharmacists and doctors. As a result of these newly established regulations, qualification norms and restrictions, many professionals lost their capacity to work and were obliged to end their economic activities.¹¹⁸ For example, in spring 1924, work permits of 34 Jewish lawyers out of the total of 60 affiliated with the Istanbul Bar were cancelled as a consequence of a new law. All these nationalistic policies, which were highly discriminatory in character, imposed hardships on every group and class within the Jewish community. With the loss of jobs, economic conditions deteriorated and poverty among Jews increased. For many desperate Jews, emigration to Europe and the Americas appeared to be the only viable choice. In contrast to their policies with non-Muslim minorities, the administration tacitly encouraged Turkish/Muslim entrepreneurship and facilitated the way for Turkish/Muslim participation in the national economy. In the meantime, through the manipulation of the press, most of the leading newspapers supported the administration's efforts to create a new ethnic identity for the economy. In their campaigns against Jews and Jewish businessmen, some

¹¹⁷ Bali, *Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni [1923-1945]*, p. 216.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

journalists, in an effort to justify themselves, went so far as to quote international anti-Semitic literature such as *The Protocols of Elders of Zion*.¹¹⁹

Most of these discriminatory policies against minorities in general and Jews in particular were, in fact, contrary to the Lausanne Treaty's main principles in regard to minorities. However, in the light of the sensitive position of the religious minorities, the authoritative character of the regime, and the new tendencies and balances appearing in world politics, an appeal to an international judiciary such as the League of Nations was out of the question. First, such an act would mean a complaint about internal affairs of the Turkish regime to a foreign institution and surely would have been taken as an act of treason. Second, for the victorious countries of World War I who were also the guarantors of the Treaty, amidst growing turmoil in Europe, Turkey with its increasing strategic importance was a country not to be offended.

Among the pressures on the Jewish community, the fiercest and most troublesome was the cultural one. For centuries, in conformity with the loose and heterogeneous Ottoman social structure, Jews had lived as a separate society without any kind of integration. Thus, not only their traditions, mindset, and culture, but more importantly, their language was different from the common language of the Empire. Other than the small percentage who had been in contact with Muslims during their business activities, most Jews did not know the Turkish language well and were capable of expressing themselves only in broken Turkish. Thus, not only at home, but also in public places, the language of conversation between Jews, if not French (as a consequence of the influence of the Alliance, among the educated), was a transformed version of Spanish, *Ladino*. Consequently, Jews were highly criticized and pressured because of their inadequate

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 225.

Turkish. “How can Jews see themselves part of this country and claim that they contribute to our nationalistic ideals if they do not even use our common language,” was a frequent complaint, shared by most other people from different social strata. Throughout the several decades of the Republic, whenever an issue came up related to Jews, it was common for the press and authorities to bring up the Jews’ inadequacy in Turkish and their insistence on speaking Ladino among themselves. It took nearly two generations for Jews to gain proficiency in using the Turkish language properly. Due to the distress that the inadequacy caused in younger generations, as can be expected, Turkification was accomplished at the expense of losing part of their Sephardic identity and culture, including *Ladino*. In the meantime, for decades, with their broken Turkish and different accent, Jews became a subject of mockery not only in the daily press but also in popular weekly magazines,¹²⁰ literary works and theater.¹²¹

The closure of most Jewish schools or the requirement to end their connections with foreign institutions such as the *Alliance Israelite* was another blow against the social and cultural structure of the Jewish community. The remaining Jewish schools permitted to continue were obliged to adopt an official syllabus prepared according to principles of Turkification, leaving little place for a foreign language or the study of Judaism.¹²²

Another area of discrimination was in regard to civil rights. Jews, similar to other minorities, did not have equal civil rights with respect to the Muslim citizens of the Empire. This

¹²⁰ *Akbaba* and *Karikatür* were the two most popular caricature magazines of the 1930s in which caricatures on Jews and their way of talking with broken Turkish were common. See Laurent Millet, “*Karikatür* Dergisinde Yahudilerle İlgili Karikatürler (1936-1948) [Caricatures on Jews in *Karikatur* Magazine (1936-1948)] in *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 34, October, 1996.

¹²¹ The haggling Jew with his ungrammatical broken Turkish was one of the familiar characters of the traditional Turkish Shadow Theater *Karagoz-Hacivat*. See <http://www.karagoz.net/english/turkisharts.htm> (Accessed in February 2012).

¹²² Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry*, p.102.

injustice was particularly visible in the status of Jews during military service. Beginning with the establishment of the Ankara government, Jews were treated differently. For example, during the War of Independence Jews could be exempt from military service by paying a special exemption tax. However, those who could not pay the tax were conscripted into special labor battalions known as “*Amele Taburlari*.” In these corps, without the right to bear arms and without uniforms, the conscripted Jews as well as other minorities were forced to march from place to place in Anatolia. From time to time they were forced to work on construction projects, usually in the Eastern rural parts of the country.¹²³ Throughout the decades of the Republic, contrary to obligatory military service regulations, tacitly discriminatory policies continued to be imposed on non-Muslims. Educated Jews were not accepted as reserve officers to perform their military service as they should have been, but instead were only allowed to serve as privates. Furthermore, Jews did not receive equal opportunity to be accepted into the civil service or to be promoted, even if they had the adequate skills or experience. The almost non-representation of Turkish Jewish citizens was especially noticeable in the country’s only institution of higher education, *Dar-ül Fünun* and in Istanbul University which took its place after the university reform of 1933.

¹²³ Such a military service was described by Haim Albukrek (Yaşar Paker) in his journal. Albukrek, who was born in 1896 into a Sephardic family, in Ankara kept a journal during his military service between March and October 1921. See Leyla Neyzi, *Amele Taburu – The Military Journal of a Jewish Soldier in Turkey During the War of Independence*. (Istanbul: The Isis Pres, 2005)

2.4 CONCLUSION

From its very beginning, nationalism as an ideology was one of the most important cornerstones of the newly established Turkish Republic. Indeed, the founders of the new regime, with their experience in the turbulent years of the decomposing multinational Ottoman Empire, were keen on establishing a national state that would be ethnically homogeneous. Furthermore, as in many other places in the world, nationalistic feelings were strong and absolute nationalistic regimes were in ascendancy. Thus, in accord with nationalist policies, the elites of the country utilized Turkification to unify different ethnic and religious minorities within the country. Redefining Turkish ethnicity in a broader sense, ethnicities that were considered as different entities in the Ottoman Empire were presumed as Turkish despite their own self identification. In relation to religious minorities, there was a general conviction that non-Muslims could not be considered “real” Turks and were regarded as outsiders or foreigners. Concurrent with these nationalist intentions, deliberate policies to reduce the non-Muslim population were implemented. Compulsory exchange of population policies by years led to discriminatory policies with the purpose of obliging religious minorities to leave the country, and making them less influential in economic and social life. Thus, throughout the period, behind Turkey’s peaceful external appearance, internally, there was the suppression of so called reactionary and subversive ethnic elements and discrimination of non-Muslim minorities with the intention of forcing them to

leave the country. As described by Tamkoç, “This was of course, “peace” base[ed] on force and fiat.”¹²⁴

The country’s relatively small Jewish community was not affected directly by the population exchange policies. But, with the reduced population of Greeks and Armenians, the Jews’ visibility as a religious minority increased. Thus, unlike the earlier experience as subjects of the Ottoman Empire, Jews now attracted much negative attention in the press and faced unfavorable policies. As a result of these policies, and due to the pressure Jews felt from specific events, for an important percentage, emigration from the country was regarded as the only viable solution for a non-discriminatory and promising future. Indeed, during the first 15 years of the Republic, its Jewish population decreased continuously. The Jewish population, assumed to be between 150,000 and 200,000 in the early 1920s, in contrast to the general population increase of the country¹²⁵, dropped to 81,672 in 1927 and 78,730 in 1935 according to census reports for those years.¹²⁶ Thus, the population figures clearly reveal a considerable exodus; about half of the Turkish Jews left in the mid 1920s as a result of economic and social pressure implemented by Turkification policies.¹²⁷

Interestingly, in contrast to experience in the Christian West, the discriminatory policies implemented against the Jewish citizens of the Republic in the 1920s and 1930s, cannot be

¹²⁴ Tamkoç, p. 301. Tamkoç also points out that from 1920 the Turkish government instituted martial law on numerous occasions, such as 1920-1923, 1925-1927 and 1939-1945. Martial law gave more power to the government in implementation of more strict policies.

¹²⁵ Levi, p. 18. Justin McCarthy gives the total Jewish population of the area of Republican Turkey as 122,265 for the year 1911-1912. See McCarthy, “Jewish Population in the Late Ottoman Period” in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Avigdor Levi, p. 387. According to McCarthy, it is difficult to explain “this loss of [more than] half of the Anatolian Jews.” He under emphasizes the emigration option and states that “Unless another explanation surfaces, one must assume that great number of Anatolian Jews [i.e., about 80,000] died [between 1912 and 1927].”

¹²⁶ Dündar, p. 159, 168.

¹²⁷ Corinna Görgü Guttstadt, “Depriving non-Muslims of citizenship as part of the Turkification policy in the early years of the Turkish Republic: The case of Turkish Jews and its consequences during the Holocaust” in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*. (London: GBR: I.B. Tauris & Company, 2006), p. 54.

declared an expression of religious anti-Semitism. Yes, beginning in the early years of the Republic with the establishment's approval, publications appeared with definite anti-Semitic and even racist overtones, and there was an obvious discriminatory attitude towards Jews. However, it is more correct to see Turkification as a reflection of state building. In the eyes of the Turkish people and elites of the new republic, Jews because of their religious and cultural differences, and their assumed close affinity with the Western World, were a foreign group incapable of assimilating into a common nationalist Turkish identity. They were viewed as foreigners, even "*guests*," rather than full-fledged citizens who should have rights exactly equal to other inhabitants of the country. Furthermore, according to the prevalent perception, Jews could not be loyal and patriotic elements in the envisioned nationalist state like Muslims who were presumed to be the real owners of the country. With aspirations to build a unified and homogeneous one-nation state, the non-Muslim presence should be "unnoticeable" i.e., it would be beneficial if its numbers were diminished and certainly, its influence curtailed.¹²⁸ Thus, in sum, in the first two decades of the Republic, it was "anti-minority xenophobia which was the hallmark of public opinion"¹²⁹ rather than the well-defined ideology of anti-Semitism that played a role in the appearance of a negative attitude toward, and harassment of Jews. In fact, these anti-minority sentiments were not specifically directed only to Jews but to all non-Muslim communities found in the state.

We also note that, the analysis of columnists in the Turkish press, and the attitude of the Turkish people towards Jews of the period, except for a few examples given below, do not reflect the existence of a perception nor presentation of Jews as a race that caused personal or national

¹²⁸ Indeed, beginning from the early days of the Republic, to be "low- profile" as much as possible will become the main behavioral characteristic of the Turkish Jewish community.

¹²⁹ Benbassa and Rodrigue, p. 163.

troubles, in contrast to racial anti-Semitic exposures pervasively seen in Europe, with Hitler's *Mein Kampf* being the most conspicuous example. Thus, although there was an unfavorable approach to Jews, still, the general attitude does not seem to comply with the definition of anti-Semitism as noted by Jean-Paul Sartre:

If a man attributes all or part of his own misfortunes and those of his country to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights, by keeping them from the country, by exterminating all of them, we say that he has anti-Semitic *opinions*.¹³⁰

Non-existence of a typically Western, classical anti-Semitism in Turkish legislation can also be seen in two reports written by German and British diplomatic delegations in Turkey. Both of these reports were written after Chaim Weizmann's visit to Turkey in November-December 1938. Interestingly, as a common point in these two reports, the diplomats' description of the official Turkish attitude in regard to anti-Semitism was almost identical. According to the British report, "anti-Semitic legislation has no basis of reality in Turkey,"¹³¹ and similarly for the Germans, "it would be a mistake to think that there would be anti-Jewish laws or regulations [in Turkey] in the near future."¹³²

A close analysis of a few conspicuous examples of the newly emerging racist and anti-Semitic publications of 1933 and 1934, which paralleled the Nazi line and attitude of press and government towards these publications, also reflects the establishment's critical regard of them as examples of harmful and foreign ideological influences to be banned. After the spring of

¹³⁰ Jean Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), p. 7. Emphasis belongs to Sartre. In the later pages of the book, Sartre states that anti-Semitism does not fall within the category of ideas protected by "the right of free opinion." According to him, "it is quite other than an idea. It is first of all a passion." See p. 10.

¹³¹ FO 371/23290/E150. From Loraine (Angora) to Halifax (London), December 31, 1938. Quoted by Soner Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*.

¹³² German State Archives, Politische Archiv Inland II, A/B R99446, December 13, 1938. Quoted by Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyetin Dişçibaşısı Sami Günzberg* [The Chief Dentist of the Court and Republic, Sami Günzberg]. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2007), p. 131.

1933, influenced by the Nazi regime in Germany, a campaign with the fervor of racist anti-Semitic ideology began to appear for the first time in Turkey. In particular, Cevat Rıfat Atılhan, the editor of the nationalist magazines *Revolution* and its renamed continuation *National Revolution* was the most prominent anti-Semitic writer. In his articles of 1933-1934 and later books, he openly conveyed the racist and anti-Semitic discourse of Nazism.¹³³ As an ardent anti-Semite, Atılhan, visited Nazi Germany several times, met with Nazi leaders like Alfred Rosenberg, and participated in the anti-Semitic Congresses of 1933 and 1934 as a delegate. Atılhan worked in close collaboration with the well-known Nazi writer and *Der Sturmer* magazine publisher, Julius Streicher. Indeed, the *National Revolution* frequently published cartoons identical to those seen in the pages of in *Der Sturmer*, the most notorious racist propaganda journal of Nazi Germany.¹³⁴ Nihal Atsız was another journalist whose anti-Semitic commentaries, published in *Orhun* magazine in 1933 and 1934, conveyed the strong influence of Nazi ideology.¹³⁵ However, these examples were very few, and other than them, in the Turkish press there was no ideological anti-Semitic fervor reminiscent of Nazi racism. To the contrary, in the same years, in daily newspapers who claimed that Turkish nationalism did not encompass anti-Semitism, there was a lot of criticism against the racist writings of Atılhan and Atsız. The government also regarded the Nazi-like anti-Semitism of those writers as an ideology foreign to Turkish policies and nationalism. Indeed, under pressure from Ankara, both writers were obliged to stop writing in journals. At the same time, for the same reasons, as a document from the Turkish Archives reflects, in several instances the government also forbade the sale or printing of

¹³³ See Bali, *Musa'nın Evlatları Cumhuriyet'in Yurttaşları*. (Istanbul: İletisim, 2001), pp 211-256.

¹³⁴ Levi, p. 103.

¹³⁵ See Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları [1934 Trachia Events]*. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008), pp. 45-55.

journals or books due to their anti-Semitic content.¹³⁶ For example, the journal *National Revolution* was forbidden to publish in 1934 after it published the first Turkish version of the conspicuously anti-Semitic book, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. According to a survey done by Bali, this edition of *The Protocols* was the only one published in Turkey before 1943 in contrast to a rather high number of publications in the following decades.¹³⁷

Significantly, reactionary acts of discrimination against Jews came from the administration in conjunction with its Turkification policies rather than from the public. Thus, these were acts from the top down in character. Even the seemingly public anti-Jewish campaign of 1934 in Trachea was actually far from a grass-roots mob movement, but, as Bali points out, a calculated act initiated by the establishment.¹³⁸ In fact, in the strict authoritative and centralized regime of the first fifteen years of the Republic, a reactionary organized act against minorities of any kind in public would not have been possible without the veiled or tacit approval of the central government. As can be seen, on numerous occasions, the regime, with its dictatorial character, was not hesitant to suppress with full force recalcitrant elements opposing its reforms whenever it saw the need. Nevertheless, the existence of the administration's authoritative and dominant role in the implementation of anti-Jewish policy should not be understood as the attitude of a government which was not shared by the most of the public. Quite the opposite, feverish nationalist discourse about nation building and ideals that were conceived to create a new national identity and consciousness, particularly in the first years after the War of

¹³⁶ Decree of January 6, 1939, no. 10178, the ban of sale of the book entitled *The Problem of the Century, Jews*. TCBA 030.18.01.02.85.111.12.

¹³⁷ Bali, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Antisemitizm [Antisemitism in the Republic Period of Turkey]" in *Felsefelogos*, No. 2, March 1998, p. 78. According to Bali, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published more than 86 times between 1943 and 1997.

¹³⁸ Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları- The 1934 Trachea Events*, pp. 374-378.

Independence, paved the way for establishing a wider, more uniform and nationalist oriented public, supportive of the governing elite.

In the fifteen years between the foundation of the Turkish Republic and World War II, the main approach of the regime to its Jewish population was very clear. Jews were a people whose presence was tolerated but not desired in the country. They were not seen as an original, real or constitutive element of the homogeneous nation envisioned for the future. The common opinion both among the general population and in the administration was that it would be better and desirable if the number and influence of Jews could be reduced. In this chapter, we have seen how this conception was very deep rooted and completely internalized by a majority of politicians, bureaucrats and even intelligentsia. A report prepared on the Jewish people by the *CHF*, the Republican People's Party, the only party of the political system during this time, was quite indicative of the current mindset: "First, we must not permit the increase of them [Jews] in the country through new-comers from abroad, [then] whenever we find the possibility, by facilitating their departure from the country [we have] to reduce their numbers ..."¹³⁹

The formation of this mindset had its roots in the dismal experiences of the nationalist uprisings in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and still fresh memories of the Christian attitude of delight during the Allied occupation. Furthermore, beginning in the 1920s, nationalism was on the rise all over the world. In the light of the predominant idea that Jewish presence was not desirable in the country, the notion that after 1933, Turkey opened its arms to the immigration of a number of academicians because they were Jews, or in the war years

¹³⁹ The report was introduced by Faik Bulut, in *The Quest for Looking for Solutions to the Kurd Problem*. Quoted by Rıdvan Akar, *Aşkale Yolcuları [Aşkale Passengers]*. (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009), p. 163. *Evvvela bunların dışardan gelme suretiyle memlekette çoğalmalarına müsaade etmemek, imkan bulundukça memleketten çıkmalarında her türlü kolaylığı göstermek suretiyle, mevcutlarını azaltmak ...*

facilitated the return of Jews who once lived in the country cannot be reconciled with the general conceptual/mental frame-work of the time. This way of thinking is in opposition to the actual policies and sentiments of those years and neglects the background necessary for understanding and interpreting the sequence of real events. In other words, such an approach is not consistent with the realities of the time and risks distorting the analysis of the two main subject matters of this study, i.e., the flight of Jewish Scientists from German controlled Europe to Turkey after 1933 and the alleged rescue of Turkish Jews in France during the war years. Indeed, to analyze what happened in the past retrospectively with imposed, manipulative approaches, and attributed values that are shaped with political interests of later years, without considering the conditions of the original time would be the most basic mistake that could be made in evaluating any historical event.

Having knowledge of the policies towards religious minorities in general, and Jews in particular, during the first fifteen years of the Turkish Republic as a background, we can now proceed to an analysis of the nature of the Turkish administration's approach to the two cases in which Jews were under the threat of the lethal Nazi policies. For the rest of the study, we will investigate critically the resettlement of scientists of Jewish origin from German Europe and then what happened to Jews of Turkish origin living in France during the war years. A through assessment of these topics is now possible as a consequence of the availability of new and previously unstudied documents which shed a fresh light on this period in Turkish and Jewish history.

PART I

3.0 HUMANITY OR RAISON D'ETAT, GERMAN OR JEWISH: THE GERMAN SCHOLARS IN TURKEY, 1933-1952¹⁴⁰

*I always found the name false which they gave us: Emigrants.
That means those who leave their country. But we
Did not leave, of our own free will
Choosing another land. Nor did we enter
Into a land, to stay there, if possible forever.
Merely, we fled. We are driven out, banned.
Not a home, but an exile, shall the land be that took us in.*

...
*But none of us
Will stay here. The final word
Is yet unspoken.*

Bertolt Brecht¹⁴¹
December 1938

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As soon as Hitler came to power, as one of his racist edicts, he issued on April 7, 1933 the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service” to prohibit non-Aryans from working as civil servants in Germany. According to the third provision of the law:

¹⁴⁰ The first version of this chapter was published as an article in *Shofar*. See *Shofar*, v. 29, No. 1, Fall 2010, pp. 48-72.

¹⁴¹ “Concerning the label Emigrant” in *Bertolt Brecht Poems 1913-1956* Ed. by John Willett and Ralph Manheim (London: Eyre Methuan Ltd., 1979), p. 301. In 1938 December, Brecht was also a political exile in Denmark.

Civil Servants who are not of Aryan descent are to be retired; if they are honorary officials, they are to be dismissed from official status.¹⁴²

A second decree four days later, defined what is meant by non-Aryan:

A person is to be regarded as non-Aryan if he is descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. It is enough for one parent or grandparent to be non-Aryan. This is to be assumed especially if one parent or one grandparent was of the Jewish faith.¹⁴³

Thus, according to these two rulings, regardless of their academic positions and merits, and regardless of their self-identification, all public employees having one Jewish grandparent were terminated from German governmental institutions. Accordingly, for those German public employees including scholars, university professors and members of various professions including doctors and lawyers, a future in Nazi Germany no longer existed. They had to find a new country in which to earn their living, to practice their profession, indeed, to save their lives. But, for these desperate individuals the question was, where to go and how?

Coincidentally, in that same year, 1933, the young Turkish Republic was in search of civil servants capable of modernizing its old-fashioned and seemingly anti-reformist educational system.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, in the early 1930s, Istanbul *Darülfünun*, the only civil academic institution in the country, with its old-fashioned *medrese* system, was far from a dynamic and scientific educational institution. Furthermore, due to antagonism among its academic staff towards Atatürk's western policies, the institution was regarded as a hindrance delaying, if not

¹⁴² "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" in *A Holocaust Reader*, ed. by Lucy S. Dawidowicz. (West Orange: Behrman House Inc., 1976), p. 38.

¹⁴³ "First Decree for Implementation of the Law for Restoration of the Professional Civil service, April 11, 1933," in *A Holocaust Reader*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁴ On Turkey's reasons for university reform, see Osman Bahadır, "1933 Üniversite Reformu Nicin Yapıldı? [Why the 1933 University Reform was Done?]" in *Türkiye'de Üniversite Anlayışının Gelişimi (1861-1961)* [The Development of University Understanding in Turkey (1861-1961)] ed. Namık Kemal Aras, Emre Dölen and Osman Bahadır (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Yayınları, 2007), pp. 52-86.

preventing, the young republic's ambitious reform movements. According to Professor Albert Malche, an Austrian expert in pedagogy, who was asked by the ministry of education to prepare a report for reforming the academic system in Turkey, a new spirit and dynamism in higher education could be attained only by replacing the non-productive and old-fashioned academicians with modern, contemporary scientists who would be recruited from Europe.

Thus, the dismissal of the German-speaking scholars of high academic ranks and Turkey's search for academicians so as to reform her educational system turned out to be a synchronistic, perfect match. Indeed, following Prof. Malche's report, more than one hundred German-speaking scholars were recruited by the Turkish Education Ministry and found refuge in Turkey.¹⁴⁵ In addition to those of Jewish origin who constituted the large majority of these scholars, there was also a smaller group, whose obligatory exile from Nazi Germany was due to their political views.

In this chapter, we will first have a closer look at this large-scale employment of German scholars from the Turkish perspective. To ascertain whether their "Jewishness" played a role in the decision made by the Turkish authorities will be one of our main tasks. In our analysis, we will seek answers to several questions. What was Turkey's policy and her approach to the exiled

¹⁴⁵ Emre Dölen points to the difficulty of giving an exact figure for the number of scholars. The difficulty arises from the mix up of academic scholars and their assistant and technical staff. Our sources contain insufficient information on those additional personnel. See Emre Dölen, "İstanbul Darülfünun'da ve Üniversitesi'nde Yabancı Öğretim Elemanları [Foreign Scholars in Istanbul Darülfünun and University]" in *The Development of University Understanding in Turkey (1861-1961)*, p. 128. Based on two different sources, Dölen reports the number of scholars who came to Istanbul University between 1933 and 1945 to be 96 and 112. Ibid, p. 128, note 52 and p.147, Table 14. According to Horst Widmann, this figure for the same period is 96 for Istanbul University and 144 for the whole of Turkey. See Horst Widmann, *Atatürk ve Üniversite Reformu [Atatürk and the University Reform]*. (Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 1999), p. 269, 211, 212, and 269. Arnold Reisman, in his comprehensive study on the subject, presents the total number of refugees from Nazism who contributed to Turkey's modernization as 188 without distinguishing between scholars and their technical staff, and including a few engineers and academicians who came from France.. See Arnold Reisman, *Turkey's Modernization, Refugees from Nazism and Atatürk's Vision* (Washington, DC: New Academic Publishing, LLC, 2006), pp. 474- 478.

German Jewish scholars? How did the Turkish authorities regard them? Did their Jewish origin have any significance? Can we discern the existence of only humanitarian motives in the Turkish administration's decision to offer positions to these Jewish scientists in Turkish universities?

Apart, from the Turkish perception, to what extent the German émigrés regarded themselves as Jewish is another issue that is worth examining. Their position and life in Turkey could be harmonious only if there was a good accord between the Turkish perception and their self-identification. In the second part of this chapter, we will analyze the complex identity and national sentiments of German scholars of Jewish origin. These scholars could be viewed as typical examples of individuals belonging to the well-educated, urban, upper-class intelligentsia of German-Jewish origin. How interested were they in Judaism? What was their relationship to the local Jewish community in Turkey? Considering that they were identified as “haymatloz” (stateless) in Turkey, what were their views concerning the concepts of home and nation? Did German humiliations, mistreatment and the Holocaust reshape their thinking about their national and religious identities, and their feeling of where they belonged? How can we relate their socio-religious behavior in Turkey with their German cultural background?

Finally, we will consider the post-war final home country selected by these scholars. Their preferences can be seen as an indication of their final conclusions on identity, home and nation. Accordingly, we will examine what choices they made when there were alternatives after the war as to where to live and work for the rest of their lives. Did their self-identification, which presumably determined their final preferences, match the Turkish perception of them?

First, with the help of newly available evidence, we will discuss the underlying incentive, *humanitarian* versus *raison d'état*, behind the recruitment of these scholars to Turkish

universities. Our second focus will be to make an assessment of the German versus Jewish identities of these scholars in the light of the above questions.

3.2 THE “JEWISHNESS” FACTOR IN THE APPROACH OF THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO EXILED GERMAN SCHOLARS

Whether the Turkish government had a special interest in, or paid any attention to, the Jewishness of the German scholars is a crucial point of interest which needs to be scrutinized. In a large number of publications and presentations in mass media in the last two decades, a common approach has been to characterize Turkey’s policy as reflecting a conscious and determined humanitarian act to save these Jewish academicians from Nazi persecution. This event has even been likened to the acceptance of the Sephardic Jews in 1492 by the Ottomans. As mentioned earlier, this idea can be found, for example, in the publications of the Quincentennial Foundation established in Turkey to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of Jews from Spain. Here is an excerpt: “History followed its course. The young Turkish Republic took the place of the Ottoman Empire. In 1933, the Great Atatürk invited to Turkey German university professors of Jewish origin who were under the threat of the Nazi persecution.”¹⁴⁶ Among many other examples, the talk given by U.S. House of Representatives member Stephen J. Solarz on September 1990 was the most illustrative one:

... This tradition [embrace of Jews of Spanish expulsion and fleeing from pogroms] has continued into modern times, as demonstrated in 1935 by the invitation of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, to prominent German Jewish

¹⁴⁶ *A Retrospection*, The Quincentennial Foundation Publication, 1992, p. 19.

professors fleeing the scourge of Nazism. While most of the world turned its back on the Jews and condemned them to the horrors of the Nazi genocide, Turkey welcomed them much as they had in 1492.¹⁴⁷

In spite of those assertions, our sources do not provide any evidence that supports the existence of such a humanitarian motif in the recruitment of these scholars. As suggested by Fritz Neumark in his memoir, the Enlightenment principle of “harmony of the common interests”¹⁴⁸ or the *raison d'état* policy probably better explains the Turkish motivations. Kader Konuk also referred to the non-humanitarian base of the Turkish act and noted that the émigré German academics “were hired because of their promise as intellectual mediators for the promotion of Europeanness in the host country.”¹⁴⁹ According to Konuk, those Jewish-German scholars “were welcomed in Turkey, not as Jews (or Germans), but as Europeans”¹⁵⁰ and in the eyes of the Turkish administration there was no distinction between “Nazis émigrés.”¹⁵¹ A talk given by the Turkish Education Minister, Reşit Galib, on July 1933, at the end of his first meeting with Schwartz and Malche, can be seen as a reflection of the Turkish mindset:

Today is a [special] day in which we accomplished an exceptional and non-exemplary work. About 500 years ago when we captured Istanbul, the Byzantine scholars emigrated to Italy and we could not avoid it. ... Consequently, the renaissance emerged. Today, we are taking the payback of it from Europe.¹⁵²

A series of Turkish archival documents, recently made public, sheds further light on the approach of the Turkish government and gives further support to the hypothesis of the lack of

¹⁴⁷ See note 6, in Introduction.

¹⁴⁸ Neumark, *Boğaziçine Sığınanlar* [Those Who Took Sheltered in Bosphorus]. (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 1982).

p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ Konuk, “Erich Auerbach and the Humanist Reform to the Turkish Education System” in *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 45, No.1, 2008, p. 85.

¹⁵⁰ Konuk, “Eternal guests, mimics, and dönme: The place of German and Turkish Jews in modern Turkey,” in *New Perspectives in Turkey*, p. 15.

¹⁵¹ Konuk, “Jewish-German Philologists in Turkish Exile: Leo Spitzer and Erich Auerbach,” p. 35.

¹⁵² Widmann, p. 48.

Turkish consideration of the Jewishness of the scholars and the absence of humanitarian intentions to help them. Of course, political concerns due to possible reactions of the German government might have also been influential in the appearance of such an attitude on the part of Turkey.

An interesting document is a letter written by Albert Einstein to the Turkish Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü. In this letter dated September 17, 1933, Einstein, as the president of the “OSE” society in Paris¹⁵³, asked for İnönü’s help in allowing for “forty professors and doctors from Germany to continue their scientific and medical career in Turkey.”¹⁵⁴ As can be seen from the Yiddish and French bilingual letterhead of Einstein’s letter, the Jewish character of “OSE” was very explicit. İnönü declined Einstein’s request in his response sent on November 14, with the argument that it was no longer possible to hire additional scholars who were “under the same political conditions” as the already hired ones (see attached correspondence in next page):

... As you surely know, distinguished Professor, we have already engaged under contract more than forty professors and physicians who have the same qualities and the same capacities, and most of whom are under the same political conditions as those who are objects of your letter. ... Under the circumstances in which we are, it will unfortunately not be possible for us to hire a greater number of these gentlemen.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ This organization was first founded in 1912 in Russia as *Obshchestvo Zdraavookhraneniya Yevreiev* (The Organization for Protection of Health of Jews). After its forced closure in 1919, it continued its activities in different countries with similar names. For example, in France its name was *Ouvre de Secours aux Enfants* (Organization for Aid to Children). See Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyetin Dişçibaşısı Sami Günzberg*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁴ Albert Einstein, letter of September 17, 1933 addressed to Turkish prime minister. See the Document no.1 (TCBA- 030.10.116.810.3) in the next page. This letter was sent to the Turkish president as an attached letter from Sami Günzberg. Günzberg’s letter also included a detailed list of 31 proposed Jewish-German scholars.

¹⁵⁵ İsmet İnönü, letter of November 14, 1933 addressed to Albert Einstein. See attached Document no.2 (BCA-Turkish Prime Minister Archives no.: 030.10.116.810.3B). The translation to English was done by Gad Freudenthal and Arnold Reisman. See Reisman, “Jewish Refugees from Nazism, Albert Einstein, and the Modernization of Higher Education in Turkey (1933-1945), in *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science & Judaism* 7. (Annual 2007), note, 35.

UNION DES SOCIÉTÉS "OSE"
 POUR LA PROTECTION DE LA SANTÉ
 DES POPULATIONS JUIVES

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פארכאנד פון די נעוועלשאפטן
 פארן י"ד'שן נעוונטשוץ

TÉL. :

PARIS (XVII^e). LE 17 September, 1933
 4, Rue Roussel

Sohbat vut
Maarif vekaletine
 9.10.933 *Yuncu*

Your Excellency,

As Honorary President of the World Union "OSE" I beg to apply to your Excellency to allow forty professors and doctors from Germany to continue their scientific and medical work in Turkey. The above mentioned cannot practise further in Germany on account of the laws governing there now. The majority of these men possess vast experience, knowledge and scientific merits and could prove very useful when settling in a new country.

Out of a great number of applicants our Union has chosen forty experienced specialists and prominent scholars, and is herewith applying to Your Excellency to permit these men to settle and practise in your country. These scientists are willing to work for a year without any remuneration in any of your institutions, according to the orders of your Government.

In supporting this application, I take the liberty to express my hope, that in granting this request your Government will not only perform an act of high humanity, but will also bring profit to your own country.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

A. Einstein

(Prof. Albert Einstein)

His Excellency
 The President of the Cabinet of Ministers
 of the Turkish Republic.

Adresse Télégraphique : "OSE" 4, RUE ROUSSEL - PARIS

3) masam bui ...
40 a yehi yehi ...

1) Kulluflu ...
2) ...

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Albert Einstein

173

Ankara, le 14 novembre 1933

T C
BAŞBAKANLIK

Monsieur le Professeur A. Einstein
Président des Sociétés "CSE"
4, Rue Roussel, 4
Paris (XVIIe.)

Monsieur le Professeur,

J'ai reçu votre lettre du 17 septembre 1933 me demandant l'admission en Turquie de quarante professeurs et docteurs qui ne peuvent plus continuer leurs oeuvres scientifiques et médicales en Allemagne, vu les lois récentes qui gouvernent ce dernier pays.

J'ai noté également que ces messieurs accepteraient de travailler dans nos établissements sous les ordres de notre Gouvernement et sans aucune rémunération pendant une année.

Tout en convenant que votre proposition est très attrayante, je me trouve dans l'obligation de vous dire que je ne vois pas la possibilité de concilier cette offre avec les lois et les règlements de notre pays.

Comme vous le savez certainement, Monsieur le Professeur, nous avons déjà engagé par contrat plus de quarante professeurs et docteurs qui présentent les mêmes qualités, les mêmes capacités et dont la plupart se trouvent dans les mêmes conditions politiques que ceux qui font l'objet de votre lettre. Ces professeurs et Docteurs ont accepté de travailler chez nous en se conformant aux lois et règlements actuellement en vigueur.

Nous travaillons en ce moment à assurer la mise au point du mécanisme délicat que constitue un organisme contenant des membres très différents par leur origine, leur culture, leur langue. C'est pourquoi actuellement et dans les circonstances où nous nous trouvons il ne nous sera malheureusement pas possible d'engager un plus grand nombre de ces messieurs.

En regrettant de n'avoir pu satisfaire votre demande, je vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Professeur, à mes sentiments de plus haute estime.

Y. İnönü
15.11.33

030 10 116 8103

Interestingly, Schwartz's memoir, written close to the end of the war, clarifies İnönü's point of view expressed in his response. Schwartz describes how in early 1935 he learned from the Turkish Health Minister that during the same period of correspondence with Einstein in 1933, the Turkish Government was actually in search of German scholars, particularly doctors in order to fill "empty posts in Ankara."¹⁵⁶ According to what Schwartz learned from the minister, the Turkish government had come to an agreement with Professor Von Laue Sauerbruch, an Aryan German scholar who visited İnönü in the summer of 1933. İnönü gave him a special mission to identify German scholars, particularly doctors that Turkey needed. Ironically, in spite of a long correspondence, this attempt turned out to be a dead-end and none of the German Aryan scholars proposed by Sauerbruch ended up accepting an offer from the Turkish government. Seemingly, in the face of the newly emerging posts in the German Universities (i.e., posts vacated by the academicians of Jewish origin), the German Aryan scholars did not feel any need or desire to apply for the challenging positions at the newly founded institutions in Ankara. Professor Sauerbruch later worked in the German-occupied Balkans as an official representative of the Nazi administration.

On the other hand, a report prepared in the summer of 1939 by Herbert Scurla, a senior officer in Germany's Ministry of Sciences and Education who was sent by the Nazi administration to monitor the German academicians in Turkey, reflects an interesting change in the Turkish approach to German scholars.¹⁵⁷ In the late 1930s, the Turkish government apparently became more trusting of the exiled German scholars than the Aryan scholars who

¹⁵⁶ Philipp Schwartz, *Kader Birliği* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2003), p. 95.

¹⁵⁷ The Scurla Report was found in the German Foreign Ministry Archives and presented firstly by Klaus-Detlev Grothusen in 1981. See Faruk Şen, *Ayyıldız Altında Sürgün [Exile Under Crescent-Star]*. (Istanbul: Günizi Yayıncılık, 2008), pp. 27-31.

were working in the country under the consent of the Nazi regime.¹⁵⁸ Due to her unpleasant experience with Germans during the First World War, Turkey regarded these Aryan scholars as Nazi agents who were working for German, rather than Turkish, interests. Indeed, the discomfort of the Turks was not unjustified. As can be seen from Scurla's report, Aryan scholars were expected to report regularly to the Nazi officials in the embassy, receive instructions from them and work in accordance with *Reich* policies.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the employment of academicians at conflict with or undesired by the Nazi Germany would be a preferable approach since these individuals were safer with regard to such kind of espionage risks. The contract prepared for the recruitment of Erich Auerbach in 1936 is additional evidence that reflects the increased uneasiness of the Turkish government. As described by Konuk, unlike the 1933 recruitment contracts,¹⁶⁰ an additional specific clause was included in this relatively new contract to prohibit Auerbach from national propagandizing: "Mr. Auerbach commits himself to abstaining from political, economic, and commercial activities and hence from activities serving the propaganda of a foreign government. He is not allowed to accept any other position in foreign institutions or establishments."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Particularly, in Ankara there were an important number of Aryan German scholars. Most of them were employed in the Agricultural Institute and some in different medical institutions.

¹⁵⁹ Şen, pp. 49-51, 55.

¹⁶⁰ For the 1933 contracts signed by émigré scholars and Cemil Hüsnü Taray, Turkish ambassador in Bern, see Dölen, p. 123.

¹⁶¹ Translated and quoted by Konuk. See Konuk "Eternal guests, mimics, and dönme: The place of German and Turkish Jews in modern Turkey," p. 18. This condition seemingly became a common clause in all contracts prepared after 1936. See *Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi'nde Yabancı Hocalar* [Foreign Teachers in the Academy of Fine Arts, ed. by Ataman Demir]. (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2008), pp. 221-311.

3.2.1 Turkish Regulations Prohibiting Foreign Jews to Enter to and Stay in Turkey

The investigation of Turkish regulations with regard to emigration and issuance of working permits for foreigners, particularly for Jews, clearly reveals that: Permission for these scientists to stay and work in Turkey could only be possible due to their scientific and academic merits. Humanitarian concerns were not a criterion for such permission. The most conspicuous among these regulations was the decree of August 29, 1938 which was specifically issued for foreign Jews and imposed an absolute ban on Jewish entrance into the country, even for transit passage purposes. In regard to our scientists, the year 1938 was particularly important since for most of them, it was in this year the contracts they had signed five years earlier were to be renewed. Apparently, increased concerns about Jewish refugee problems in the wake of the Evian conference held in July drove the Turkish government to institute a more comprehensive and strict policy. The August decree was issued as a “secret” one, not published in *Resmi Gazete*, the *Official Turkish Journal*, and remained classified¹⁶² for more than sixty years until it was revealed recently for the first time by Bilal Şimşir in his book published in November 2010.¹⁶³ The decree reveals the intolerance of the Turkish government to the entrance and settling of those foreign Jews in Turkey who were under restrictions in their home countries for any reason except for those whose presence would be beneficial for the country. The decree was so rigid that even for those who possessed the Immigration Certificate and visa for Palestine (which was

¹⁶² Corinna (Corry) Gustadt, “Turkey’s Role as a Transit Space for Jewish Refugees to Palestine during World War II” in *Encounters at the Bosphorus. Turkey during World War II*. Proceedings of the international conference in Wrocław and Kryzyowa, Poland, 28-30 September 2007, p. 4.

¹⁶³ Bilal Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 590.

extremely difficult to obtain), to continue their voyage through Turkey was only possible after difficult and tedious efforts to obtain permission from the Turkish Council of Ministers.¹⁶⁴

.... Although [in the past] measures were taken to limit the entrance of Jews, the conditions developing in Europe against Jews show that these measures would become insufficient to avoid a possible massive Jewish refugee movement, and to ensure the prevention of the transformation of their original temporary stay into a permanent settlement, beginning from today, the proposal for *a decision not to issue a visa definitely* to the Jewish citizens of Germany, Hungary and Rumania with the exception of only those who were invited by the government or appointed for an employment and endorsed by the Council of Ministers... is approved on 8/29/1938 after the examination of the Council of Ministers. ...¹⁶⁵

The decree of August 29, 1938 gave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a free hand to include Jewish citizens of other countries into the scope of restrictions whenever necessary. Indeed, in a very short time, Italy was included in the countries above. In March 1939, in the wake of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, this country was also added to the list, and for the Jews of Czechoslovakia obtaining a Turkish visa became almost impossible.¹⁶⁶

The ban on the entrance of Jews from German-controlled Europe, even for transit passage purposes, by the August 29, 1938 decree verifies that Turkish policy vis-a-vis Jews being persecuted, by the Nazi regime was not intended to help or rescue them. To be beneficial to the

¹⁶⁴ A number of documents in the Turkish Prime Ministry Republic Archives show that for each case of the transit passage to Palestine, a related decree was issued. As an example, a decree of June 22, 1940, no 2/13747 shows the permission given to Josef Reisner to pass through Turkey on his voyage to Syria. According to the decree, Reisner was the honorary consulate of Turkey in Bratislava before the German occupation of Czechoslovakia. TCBA 030.18.01.02.91.59.7

¹⁶⁵ ... vaziyetin Avrupa'da Yahudiler aleyhine inkisaf etmekte olmasi alinan bu tedbirlerin kifayetsizligini gosteremis oldugundan mutekasif bir Yahudi kitlesinin muvakkat kaydile gelip memlekete daimi olarak yerlesmelerinin simdiden onune gecilmesini teminen Almanya, Macaristan ve Romanya tabiiyetindeki Yahudilere katiyyen vize verilmemesi, Hukumetce davet olunan veya hizmete alinanların İcra Vekilleri Heyetinden karar alınmak kaydıyla bundan istisnasi ... hususunda bir karar ittihazı istenmistir. Bu is İcra Vekilleri Heyetince 29/8/1938 tarihinde tekil edilerek ekli vechile muamel yapılması onanmistir. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 74. Translated and emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

¹⁶⁶ From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Embassies and Consulates, March 21, 1939. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 595.

country, to have an invitation for employment and finally endorsement of the council of ministers were all together *sine qua non* conditions for their acceptance into the country.

3.3 JEWISH IDENTITY OF SCHOLARS

In the previous part, we emphasized that the Jewishness of German scholars did not play a role in their recruitment by the Turkish government. In fact, in the eyes of Turkish officials, these scholars were neither Jews nor Germans, but Europeans who, they believed, could bring the necessary expertise to the country for establishing a modern tertiary educational system. To see whether these scholars fulfilled the expectations of the Turkish government was another point of interest. Renewal of their contracts and recruitment of similar new candidates would be possible only if they satisfactorily met the original expectations. In this part, we will focus on the personalities of these scholars and examine to what extent Jewishness was an identifying trait of these scholars. We will examine, in particular, the 95 German scholars, for whom we have evidence regarding their Jewish origin or Jewish connection.¹⁶⁷ Among them, 12 were not actually Jewish in origin, but their wives were. In view of their insistence on not divorcing their wives in spite of the advantages that they could have continued to enjoy in Germany and the events they chose to be exposed to, these scholars are also included in our analysis. In fact, among them, the family of the astronomer Erwin Freundlich seems to be the most traditionally Jewish, although Dr. Freundlich himself was not Jewish.

¹⁶⁷ See Appendix A, Table 1, in p. 267, for the list of these scholars.

The memoirs and memories of these scholars and their family members, published in various books, and, although limited, the oral testimonies of some members of the Turkish Jewish community will be used in making an assessment of the refugees' social life in Turkey as well as their Jewish identity.

3.3.1 Memoirs of German scholars

Several memoirs written by exiled scholars are valuable for our purpose. Among them, the most detailed is the one written by Ernst Hirsch.¹⁶⁸ Hirsch was a promising young law scholar when he was dismissed from Frankfurt University. During the 19 years he lived in Turkey, Hirsch actively taught in universities in both Istanbul and Ankara, and made profound contributions to the modernization of the Turkish commercial legal system. In 1952, he received an offer from Berlin University and returned to Germany. Hirsch described himself as a German citizen of Jewish religion who did not have any Jewish religious convictions.¹⁶⁹ For him, to be a German and to be Jewish were not conflicting concepts. Hirsch described his relationship to Judaism explicitly:

I never see Jews as different and distinct people. For me Jewishness has always been the belief of my ancestors, exclusively, and nothing more. Nevertheless, I did not see also a reason to leave my existing belief and to convert to another one. ... Since, I do not have typical Jewish characteristics and since for years I kept a distance from all kinds of Jewish communities, I should not be viewed as Jewish neither from religious nor from social aspects.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Ernest Hirsch, *Hatıralarım*- [My Memories- Kaiser Period, Weimar Republic, Atatürk's Country] (Ankara: Banka ve Ticaret Hukuku Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1985)

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Fritz Neumark, an economist from Frankfurt University, also wrote a memoir about his exiled years in Turkey.¹⁷¹ Until his return to Germany in 1951, Neumark worked for 18 years at Istanbul University. With his excellent academic and social skills, and, particularly, with his early competence in Turkish language, he became one of the most popular academicians among the German scholars. Unlike Hirsch, Neumark made no explicit mention of his feelings towards Judaism. Nevertheless, his silence about his Jewish origin and the scarcity of details on Nazi Germany's Jewish policies in his memoir can be seen as indications of his aloofness to Judaism, or even the non-existence of a Jewish identity. In fact, his wife was Aryan and his two children were baptized at an early age.¹⁷² Moreover, according to a source, he was an atheist.¹⁷³

Among the memoirs, although it is the shortest, the one written by the Hungarian born, Frankfurt pathologist Philipp Schwartz is the most widely cited. Unlike the other memoirs, it was not written decades later, but in the last years of the war. Thus, it has the character of a diary and contains important details. Furthermore, as leader and representative of the exiled scholars, Schwartz was the key person, the "true *'spiritus rector'* of the whole Turkish venture."¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, unlike the others, Schwartz hints at a sense of Jewish nationalism in his memoir. For example, in a very different context, with one sentence, he mentions his view on Judaism: "Judaism can only survive as long as Jews have the consciousness of being a nation."¹⁷⁵ In another place, he mentions how it was difficult for a Jew to be accepted in a rather hostile and competitive German academic environment. It is the last paragraph that particularly reveals

¹⁷¹ Fritz Neumark, *Boğaziçine Sığınanlar* [Those Who Took Sheltered in Bosphorus] (Istanbul: Istanbul University Press, 1982).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁷³ *Haymatloz- Exil in der Türkei 1933-1945*- CD-ROM prepared by Vereins Aktives Museum – Berlin/Germany, 2000.

¹⁷⁴ Neumark, p. 74.

¹⁷⁵ Philipp Schwartz, p. 73.

Schwartz's close relationship with Judaism. In this paragraph, he explains how he was sent to London three times by the Turkish Government to convey messages to Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organization.¹⁷⁶ He even claims he was the person who arranged Weizmann's visit of December 1938 to Turkey. In spite of all his interest in Jewish matters, Schwartz stayed in Turkey until 1951, and then interestingly, preferred to go back to Germany. However, after two years he moved to the United States.¹⁷⁷

3.3.2 Memories, recollections of family members and testimonies from locals in Turkey

Like the memoirs described above, the memories of scholars and their family members also serve as a useful source for analyzing the social and cultural lives of exiles and their Jewish identity. However, in these recollections, there is almost no mention of their religious behaviors or activities.

Indeed, in her memories, Frances Hellmann, one of the daughters of Karl Hellmann, describes the aloofness of the German Jewish colony from any kind of religious practice. According to her, except for the Freundlich family, there was no one in the "entire community of German émigrés who observed any Jewish holidays whatsoever! By then I was approaching my

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 100. A recent book written by Rıfat Bali sheds light on the rather mystifying mediator activities of Schwartz between the Turkish Government and Weizmann. Bali states that during Weizmann and his wife's visit to Turkey in December 1938, besides Schwartz, he met with several German scholars (according to the description in Mrs. Weizmann's memoir, one of them must be mathematician William Prager) in the house of Sami Günzberg, a Turkish Jew who had close relations with the president and Turkish notables in Ankara as their dentist. Schwarz also accompanied Weizmann in his meeting with the Turkish prime minister during his visit to Ankara. See Rıfat Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyetin Dişçibaşısı, Sami Günzberg* [The Chief Dentist of the Court and Republic, Sami Günzberg], pp. 115-130.

¹⁷⁷ Widmann, p.490.

twenties, but was totally clueless as to the meaning of Passover.”¹⁷⁸ Another émigré child, Martin Haurowitz, states that he never heard a Yiddish or Hebrew word or phrase either from his father or from any other professor or their wives with whom they were in social contact.¹⁷⁹ As another example, Kurt Heilbronn, child of another well-known scholar, Alfred Heilbronn, described the identity consciousness of his father explicitly as: “My father regarded himself beyond religions. He has not felt himself Jewish until Hitler reminded him [of] his Jewishness.”¹⁸⁰

From the point of view of Jewish nationalism other than Schwartz’s activities previously mentioned, we have no evidence to attest to such interest among the German refugees. The only notable exception to this statement is the efforts of the pediatrician Albert Eckstein in Ankara. Eckstein’s son and wife describe in their memories how, at the initiative of Chaim Barlas, the representative of the Jewish Agency in Turkey, Eckstein tried to help with the transport of a number of Jewish children from Sweden to Palestine through Turkey using his good relationship with the Turkish prime minister.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, correspondence between Barlas and Prof. Eckstein reveals that the Eckstein couple visited Palestine in the spring of 1943.¹⁸² The same communication also reflects Prof. Eckstein’s interest in meeting with frequent visitors coming from the Jewish Agency in Palestine. Most probably, Prof. Eckstein was their intermediary in

¹⁷⁸ Frances (Hellman) Güterbock’s memory, quoted in Reisman, *Turkey’s Modernization*, p. 399.

¹⁷⁹ Martin Haurowitz’s memory, quoted in Reisman, *Turkey’s Modernization*, p. 411. Martin Haurowitz describes his father as agnostic.

¹⁸⁰ Melis Niyego, “Alman Profesörlerin çocukları Bilgi Üniversitesi’nde anılarını paylaştı.- The children of German Professors shared their memories in Bilgi University.” *Şalom*, December, 31 2008.

¹⁸¹ Klaus and Dr. Erna Eckstein-Schlossmann’s memories, quoted in Reisman, *Turkey’s Modernization*, p. 404. A document from Central Zionist Archives show Mrs. Eckstein’s deliverance of the required sum for the train tickets up to Turkish Border station, Meydanıkbez for a certain Mr. Naphtali and his wife from Berlin. From Barlas to Mrs. Eckstein, August 24, 1943. CZA L15/435-13.

¹⁸² From Barlas to Prof. Eckstein, April 24, 1943. CZA L15/435-19. Also, from Barlas to Kaplan, Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, April 23, 1943. CZA L15/435-20.

securing appointments from the Turkish officials and foreign diplomatic delegations in Ankara.¹⁸³ However, it is difficult to estimate whether nationalistic drive¹⁸⁴ or humanitarian motivations were the real factor in such activities of Prof. Eckstein and his wife who was an Aryan. In fact, Eckstein is another scholar who preferred to return to Germany after the war.

A close examination of the German emigré scholars in Table 1 shows the departure of five scholars from Turkey to Palestine during the war years. Nevertheless, it seems the termination of their contracts by the Turkish Government was the real reason for their leaving, rather than any other kind of motivation.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, in those war years, Palestine could be the only destination for these scholars, and the presence of the Jewish Agency's Office in Istanbul provided the opportunity for them to get a British Immigration Certificate for Palestine, normally difficult to obtain. Interestingly, a document shows that it was again through Prof. Eckstein's intercession that the German scholar Prof. Otto Gerngross was able to get an "emergency passport for himself, his wife, and daughter from the British Passport Office in Istanbul."¹⁸⁶

Other than the memoirs and memories of German refugees, a number of accounts of Turkish Jews can also be seen as valuable sources for our investigation. Interestingly, all of these accounts testify to the non-interest of German scholars in Judaism or the Jewish presence in Turkey. For example, the Jewish students of those scholars and the members of the Istanbul Jewish community who had some rare social interactions with them, particularly emphasized that

¹⁸³ From Joseph Goldin to Prof. Eckstein, November 24, 1944. CZA L15/435-8.

¹⁸⁴ In a book written on Albert Eckstein, he was described as a member of a "Jewish Organization." However, in a personal communication of 2000, the writer could not specify the information and his source. Probably, what he means was the Jewish Agency to which Eckstein had no direct relation. See Nejat Akar, *Anadolu'da Bir Çocuk Doktoru, Ord. Prof. Albert Eckstein* [A Pediatrician in Anatolia, Ord. Prof. Albert Eckstein] (Ankara, 1999), p. 76.

¹⁸⁵ For Prof. Otto Gerngross see Widmann, p. 259; for Prof. Karl Hellman, see *ibid.*, p. 141; for Kurt Steinitz, see Reisman, *Turkey's Modernization*, p. 141; for George Fuchs, see *ibid.*, p. 291.

¹⁸⁶ From Prof. Gerngross to Barlas, September 8, 1943. CZA L15/435-32. Translation from German by Anita Ender.

they did not detect any kind of Jewish identity among the scholars.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, members of the Ankara Jewish community affirmed that they did not notice any special attention or interest from refugee doctors even in their doctor-patient relationship.¹⁸⁸ The head of the Ankara Jewish community, who was active in community life for two decades starting from 1942, also did not have any memory of a connection with the refugees.¹⁸⁹ According to his recollections, none of the German Jewish émigrés in Ankara ever visited the synagogue of Ankara, even for reasons of curiosity.¹⁹⁰ Thus, interviews and other evidence reflect the absence of any contact between the German scholars and the local Jewish community. In the registers of the Ashkenazi community of Istanbul, there are no documents that illustrate a Jewish marriage, birth, *brit mila* (circumcision), or *bar-mitzvah* involving German scholars. According to Aykut Kazancıgil, even most of those who died during their stay in Turkey were not buried in a Jewish cemetery, but in Muslim cemeteries.¹⁹¹

As can be seen, consistently all of our sources indicate that the Jewish scholars who emigrated from Germany to Turkey did not have traditional Jewish identities. Besides being non-practicing Jews, they also did not exhibit any kind of behavior, social interaction or consciousness which could reflect their Jewish origins or connection. Thus, they present a distinctive and peculiar socio-religious behavior which merits more scrutiny.

¹⁸⁷ Personal interviews with Yomtov Garti, Melanie Garti and Joseph Dannon, autumn 1999.

¹⁸⁸ Personal interview with Beki L. Bahar, Autumn 1999.

¹⁸⁹ Hirsch who was in Ankara between the years 1943 and 1952, in his memoir states that he did not have any contacts with a Jewish community after 1933. Hirsch, p. 46.

¹⁹⁰ Personal interview with Joseph Levi, Autumn 1999.

¹⁹¹ Aykut Kazancıgil, Ugur Tanyeli and İlber Ortaylı “Niye Geldiler, Niye Gittiler? Kimse Anlamadı [Why They Came and Went Back? No Body Understood.]” In *Cogito-Turkiyenin Yabancıları* [The Foreigners of Turkey] (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000), p. 130.

The German scholars of Jewish origin presently being investigated can be understood as representatives of well-educated, highly acculturated and entirely urbanized upper-class Weimar period German Jewry, with their typical backgrounds, values, mindsets and behavioral habits. Thus, their aloofness to a Jewish identity can be understood only through the analysis of similar German Jewish elites of pre-Nazi Germany. Moreover, thinking of Turkey's political situation as an insular social laboratory, free from direct influence of the vicious racial policies of Nazi Germany and its brutal war conditions, the behavior of the refugees verifies the widely-accepted analyses for defining the general behavioral characteristics of upper class German Jewry in the first decades of the twentieth century.

In order to understand the reasons for this socio-cultural behavior and the real cultural identity of the exiled scholars, a brief analysis of the cultural evolution of German Jewry will be enlightening.

3.3.3 Cultural Background of German Jewish Scholars as a Factor Shaping their Identity

A unique Jewish existence developed in the German states as a result of continuous interactions with German society starting from the last decades of the eighteenth century. The first period of this era is the period of the transformation of multiple German states into a nation-state. During the process of political consolidation and centralization, a highly ideological culture charged with enlightenment rationalism and the ideal of *Bildung* played a significant unifying role.¹⁹² *Bildung* can be defined briefly as a combination of “education with notions of character

¹⁹² David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780-1840*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), pp. 13-32.

formation and moral education.”¹⁹³ The same concept of *Bildung* was also adopted with its full values by German Jewry with a passion to be accepted as equals in German society. As described below by George L. Mosse, *Bildung* became the basis of the newly forming identity of German Jews in a search to humanize their society and their lives:

Such self-education [Bildung] was an inward process of development through which the inherent abilities of the individual were developed and realized. The term “inward process” as applied to the acquisition of Bildung did not refer to instinctual drives or emotional preferences but to cultivation of reason and aesthetic taste; its purpose was to lead the individual from superstition to enlightenment. Bildung and the Enlightenment joined hands during the period of Jewish emancipation; they were meant to complement each other. Moreover, such self-cultivation was a continuous process which was never supposed to end during one’s life. Thus those who followed this ideal saw themselves as part of a process rather than as finished products of education. Surely here was an ideal ready-made for Jewish assimilation, because it transcended all differences of nationality and religion through the unfolding of the individual personality.¹⁹⁴

Thus, German Jewish intellectuals persistently held and internalized the notions of *Bildung* like a faith, with a strong passion to be accepted by the major culture and to be beyond the hostile, rising nationalism. The concept of *Bildung* “lifted immutability and became a secular religion” as pointed out by Mosse. It was “the religion of humanity ... a secular faith, not dependent upon revealed religion- a faith, however, which took nothing on trust and whose truths were discovered only by a critical mind constantly refined through self-cultivation.”¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, their strengthened belief in the freedom of the individual from all domination and in the superiority of reason also gradually eroded their ties with Jewishness. As described by Paul Mendes-Flohr, Judaism was regarded as outdated:

In hastening to identify with German Kultur, the Jews often viewed their own culture as an impediment, as ill-suited to cognitive and axiom-logical requirements of

¹⁹³ George L. Mosse, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

the modern world. The tradition and folkways of their ancestral faith were not infrequently regarded as unmodern, even embarrassingly anachronistic. Jews often internalized the negative image of Judaism that prevailed even in enlightened circles.¹⁹⁶

Through their belief in individualism and the potential of human reason, intellectual German Jews arrived at a final point of transcendence that was beyond Judaism or any other religion. According to Mosse it was the ideals of *Bildung* that replaced religion:

The void between traditional Christianity and Judaism as a revealed religion was filled by the ideal of *Bildung*. It provided a meaningful heritage for some of the most articulate and intellectual German Jews. ... At a time when many Germans found a secular religion in nationalism, Jews also found a secular faith-in the older concept of *Bildung*, based on individualism and rationality.¹⁹⁷

However, as exemplified by exiled scholars like Fritz Neumark, Karl Hellmann and Felix Haurowitz¹⁹⁸, in spite of their aloofness to religion, it was not uncommon among German Jewry to baptize their children, presumably motivated by the desire to protect their children from having to suffer anti-Semitism.

3.3.4 Reflection of their Identity on their Life as Émigrés in Turkey

The socio-religious behavior of the exiled scholars can be explained to a large extent by the evolved identity of German Jewry described above. Indeed, they were the very last typical and perfect examples of the highly articulate and intellectual German Jewry that disastrously disappeared under the racist policies of the Nazi regime during the Holocaust. During their stay

¹⁹⁶ Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ Mosse, p. 42.

¹⁹⁸ Dr. Martin Harwit (Haurowitz), who was raised as a Protestant, describes in his memoir, how he learned his father and mother were Jewish when he was fourteen years old. Although the Haurowitzs were originally from Czechoslovakia, their attitude to Judaism can be shown as an illustrative example of the trend. See Reisman, *Turkey's Modernization*, pp. 410-412.

in Turkey, these scholars inherently followed the footprints of their co-religionists of the pre-Nazi age and sustained the same ideals of *Bildung* held on by Jews but abandoned or transformed by the Germans themselves, decades ago. Thus, their lifestyle in Turkey can be seen as a reflection of German - Jewish socio-cultural behavior of pre-Nazi Germany. The ideals that they inherited continued to guide them in their daily lives in Turkey and the scholars found common ground in their relations with each other, regardless of their supposed origin. It is also possible to say that although there was little contact between them, they also shared values and patterns of thought with their new Turkish acquaintances. Similar to most of the German co-religionists of their age, the elite Jews in Turkey were aware of their Jewishness. They were Jews by definition, but they had little, if any, ties with Jewish traditions. As the last heirs of a long tradition which gradually evolved throughout the years since the Enlightenment, the personal self-conviction of German-Jewish scholars was apparently beyond any kind of revealed religion. It might even be more appropriate to see them as members of a kind of humanistic religion. The absence of any religious ceremonial acts on symbolic occasions like weddings or even funerals, during their stay in Turkey can be explained as outcomes of their indifference to an established religious conviction.

From another standpoint, for several reasons, the conditions in Turkey presented a suitable framework for perpetuating these behavioral characteristics of German-Jewish identity of the pre-Nazi era. First, in Turkey, as if in a vacuum, they were living in a Muslim community and culture with which they had limited contact. They never mixed socially with the Muslim society nor even with the predominantly Sephardic Jewish community. They pursued a

somewhat “German life,”¹⁹⁹ i.e., they always remained a distinctive and segregated community with their different language, customs and social life. Secondly, despite the emphasis upon Turkish nationalism and the implementation of Turkification policies during this period,²⁰⁰ the German scholars never experienced any discriminatory, racial, or other forms of victimization in Turkey. The relatively peaceful conditions in Turkey permitted the exiles to be less affected by the adverse conditions of the Nazi regime as had been the case in Germany. As outsiders to Turkish society, the German scholars were “construed as exemplary Europeans and not as Jews *per se*,” as pointed out by Kader Konuk.²⁰¹ Thus, the exiles did not directly face the unbearable, humiliating, and brutal anti-Semitic policies of Nazism which could have changed their perceptions of Germans and German values and which could have led some of them to reject their German identity and to affirm instead a positive Jewish identity. The third important point is, in fact, an outcome of the second. In Turkey, the exiles also did not experience, or were not influenced by, the newly resurgent vibrancy in the search for Jewish roots, or by any inclination to embrace a new kind of Jewish identity that appeared and gradually grew in Germany beginning from the early years of the Nazi regime in response to discriminatory racial laws. In sum, under Turkish living conditions, they found themselves living in a self-constructed vacuum that sheltered them from all of these effects. Thus, they could continue living according to the

¹⁹⁹ Letter of Leo Spitzer, émigré Romance scholar to Romance philologist Karl Vossler, 6 December 1936. Quoted in Konuk, “Eternal guests, mimics, and dönme: The place of German and Turkish Jews in modern Turkey,” p. 15.

²⁰⁰ Beginning from the early days of the Turkish Republic, the non-Muslim minorities had been exposed to strong discriminatory policies as a result of the nationalist Turkification ideologies. See previous chapter. The local Jewish communities were also affected from these official policies of a xenophobic character. For example, in 1934 a considerable percent of Jews living in different parts of Thrace were obliged to leave their homelands after an undercover aggression orchestrated against them. In 1942, all non-Muslim minorities, including Jews, were subjected to the Capital Tax Law. See Bali *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni [1923-1945]; 1934 Trakya Olayları*, and *The “Varlık Vergisi” Affair* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2005). We note that in their memoirs, Hirsch, a law professor, did not mention the Capital Tax Law, and Neumark, a professor of economics, referred to this law only briefly without emphasizing its destructive effects (Neumark, p. 144).

²⁰¹ Konuk, p. 9, 11.

ideals of *Bildung* based on Enlightenment principles that remained unchallenged and continued to be the specific but implicit form of identity of the exiles in their new, temporary home.

3.4 FINAL CHOICES

Lastly, we will focus on the final choices of the exiled scholars for where to continue their life after the war was over. This choice can be meaningful in assessing once more choice of identity and personal inclinations as well as preferences. Table I in Appendix A lists where these 95 scholars ended up continuing their scientific (or medical) careers. After leaving aside the 16 refugee scholars who died during their stay in Turkey, 39% (i.e., 31, [T1 column] of the scholars out of 79) preferred to return to Germany. This percentage increases to 58% if we consider exclusively the scholars who were in Turkey at the end of the war (i.e., 29 scholars out of 50). From these results, it is possible to see that although these scholars had many options at the end of the war, a high percentage chose to go back to Germany. Among the alternatives, the United States, especially after the war due to its high living standards, would seem to have been the ideal choice.²⁰² Indeed, after the war, 16 scholars, 32% continued their careers in esteemed universities in the U. S. Apparently, the anti-socialist and anti-communist thread associated with the House un-American and McCarthy hearings of the late forties and early fifties did not

²⁰² As shown by Reisman, until the end of the WWII, due to religious and gender discrimination policies existing in premium universities and teaching hospitals in the U.S., to receive a job offer from them was extremely rare. Indeed, Von Misses was hired by Harvard as a convert to Catholicism and Prager was accepted to Brown upon declaring himself “of protestant persuasion.” See Reisman, *Turkey’s Modernization*, pp.311-331. See also, Reisman, “German Jewish Intellectuals’ Diaspora in Turkey: 1933-55” in *The Historian*, Fall 2007, p. 456.

impede their acceptance by American universities.²⁰³ Another factor to consider is the full retroactive pension rights offered by Germany which may have been an important element in shaping the decisions of some of the scholars, particularly those of advanced age, who left Turkey for Germany.²⁰⁴ However, in spite of all these factors, the decision of these scholars to return to Germany in a rather high percentage is instructive and reflects the scholars' "longing to their country, particularly their language"²⁰⁵ as described by Neumark in his memories. Their decisions can be seen as even more meaningful when we consider the fact that most of them lost family members or friends in the Holocaust. Their "choice" can be regarded as firm evidence of their inherent German character. As Brecht wrote in his poem, in the end, *none of exiles stayed in Turkey and an important number of them spoke their final words in Germany.*

3.5 CONCLUSION

We can now revisit our basic questions. Did the Jewishness of the German scholars play a role in their recruitment by the Turkish government? The recently disclosed correspondence between İnönü and Einstein, in relation to Schwartz's memories concerning the same issue at the same period of time lends support to a *raison d'état*, rather than humanitarian motives. In fact, in the

²⁰³ The three scholars from the Ankara University, Hans Güterbock, Benno Landsberger and Wolfram Eberhard, whose contracts were terminated with much uproar in spring 1948, due to their supposedly leftist political orientation, did not face much difficulty in being accepted to top level American universities like the University of Chicago and the University of California system in the same year. See Hirsch, p.426. Furthermore, as can be seen from the attached Table, among the 16 scholars who continued their career in the United States (after the war), eight, i.e., 50%, began to work during the McCarthy period, and seven, before 1948.

²⁰⁴ The retroactive pension rights were recognized in 1955 after most of émigrés' decisions. See Table 1 for the departure dates of émigrés. On pension rights, see Aykut Kazancıgil, "Niye Geldiler, Niye Gittiler? Kimse Anlamadı [Why They Came and Why They Went Back? No Body Understood]," p. 131.

²⁰⁵ Neumark, p. 152.

eyes of the Turkish administration, the scholars were not Jewish refugees to be saved or protected but, as Konuk pointed out, they were regarded as “representatives of European civilization and not as Jews *per se*.”²⁰⁶ It is possible to say that their aloof relationship with their non-noticeable Jewish background further facilitated the Turkish government’s recognition of them as neutral Europeans and seamlessly met the expectations. The decree of August 29, 1938 that was also declassified very recently further confirms that only those Jews who were of some benefit to the country were permitted to immigrate to Turkey.

It was after the 1990s that the Jewishness of those scholars was brought to the forefront with a newly adopted discourse. Kader Konuk also points out that the revived interest in those scholars appeared in those years when they were considered as “representatives of an intellectual Jewish German minority.”²⁰⁷ He articulates how a new meaning was attributed to their Jewishness and to their recruitment by Turkey, hitherto not observed:

The origin of modern education at Istanbul Universitesi is narrated as a story of rescuing Jews-communist émigrés receive less attention under the given historical circumstances- and thus a story of Turkey’s ability to surpass Germany by displaying “humanity” towards Jews. This move allows the assertion of several qualities of the Turkish nation: on the one hand, it’s civilized nature as compared to Germany’s barbaric past, demonstrating Turkey’s superior Europeanness; on the other, nostalgia for a multireligious and multiethnic Ottoman past. As a result, émigrés ... have become unique figures in the rationalization of the Turkish nation as European; at the same time, their Jewishness serves to bridge the schism between the Ottoman past and the Turkish present.²⁰⁸

Finally, our analysis, including the data presented in Table 1, on their final choices, leads us to conclude that although they were considered Jewish by the Hitler regime and they were forced to leave Germany, they had very little, if any, Jewish identity or commitment to Jewish

²⁰⁶ Konuk, “Eternal guests, mimics, and dönme: The place of German and Turkish Jews in modern Turkey,” p. 7-9.

²⁰⁷ Konuk, “Jewish-German Philologists in Turkish Exile: Leo Spitzer and Erich Auerbach” in *Exile and Otherness: New approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees* ed. Alexander Stephan. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2005), p. 41.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

culture. As individuals who were most sincere and loyal adherents of the old German concept of *Bildung*, it might be more appropriate to see them as the last representatives of a disappeared German Jewry.

PART II

4.0 MYTHS AND FACTS: WHAT HAPPENED TO TURKISH JEWS IN FRANCE DURING WWII?

4.1 NEUTRAL COUNTRIES AND FOREIGN JEWS

4.1.1 Neutral Countries as Bystanders and Turkey

Within the framework of Holocaust studies, the approach and policies of the five neutral countries of the European continent with regard to the plight of European Jewry during World War II falls under the general topic of “bystanders of the Holocaust.” In the face of the hot and critically important aspects of the Holocaust, the attitude of neutral countries has attracted relatively less attention among Holocaust historians. In the extensive review by Saul Friedlander on Holocaust studies,²⁰⁹ the description of “the attitudes of the governments of the neutral countries” and their “refugee policies”²¹⁰ takes up no more than two short paragraphs. What is even more striking is that the review contains information, albeit brief, on each of four neutral countries, i.e., Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain, but there is no mention whatsoever of Turkey, the fifth neutral country.

²⁰⁹ Saul Friedlander, “The Holocaust” in *The Oxford Handbook Of Jewish Studies*, ed. by Martin Goodman. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 426.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

What could be the reason for such a well-known Holocaust historian's omission of Turkey in such a comprehensive review? Was it simply a mistake or an unintentional omission? Or, did the author feel uncomfortable including Turkey in the same category as the other neutral nations? In other words, did Turkey not fit his statement that "the attitude of the governments and authorities of the neutral and Allied countries to the Jews attempting to flee the Reich or German-occupied Europe are essentially known by now?"²¹¹

Existing restrictions on examining the war years' documents, particularly those in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives,²¹² might explain Friedlander's silence on Turkey. In fact, restricting, if not opposing, publication of the content of communications, minutes, and executive agreements on foreign relations on the grounds that it would be "contrary to national security and public interest" and that these documents should be "guarded as a *state secret*"²¹³ appears to be one of the established, but undeclared, rules of the Turkish state administration. Metin Tamkoç presents how these secrecy concerns resulted in a blurry picture of Turkish Foreign policies:

Because of the heavy blanket of secrecy covering the foreign policy decision making process and the conduct of foreign relations of Turkey, one can only form a somewhat hazy picture of this otherwise colorful subject by piecing together related data reported in memoirs and in journals and newspapers. Indeed, the process of putting such data together into a meaningful form and shape is like working jigsaw puzzles.²¹⁴

Thus, it is hard to scrutinize Turkish policies concerning the German assault against European Jewry in a meticulous and critically balanced manner similar to the investigation of the

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Engin Berber, "Ulusal Arşivlerimiz, Araştırmacılar ve Kurtuluş Savaşı Belgeleri [Our National Archives, Researchers and Independence War Documents.]" <http://www.gunlukplan.org/tarih-ders-notlari/579-ulusal-arsivlerimiz-arastirmacilar-ve-kurtulus-savasi-belgeleri.html>

²¹³ Metin Tamkoç, *The Warrior Diplomats*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1976), p. 131.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

policies of the other four neutral countries. To date, permission to review these materials has been granted to only a few “selected” historians and retired diplomats, thereby raising concerns about how objective and detached their evaluation of the subject is. Besides, to what extent they were able to dig into the Ministry Archives remains a question yet to be answered.

4.1.2 “Foreign Jews”

In the fall of 1941, German racial policies escalated into a more radical form with the decision of the Hitler regime to implement the “Final Solution.”²¹⁵ For Jews trapped in the German sphere, the neutral countries in Europe became both destinations to be reached and potential bases for rescue and aid operations. The willingness of the neutral countries to protect, aid, and save Jewish people gained crucial importance. The attitudes of these neutral countries determined the fate of many Jews, whether they were rescued from German atrocities, or pushed to an end that might be fatal.

Obviously, the geo-political status of each of the neutral countries, their social and cultural formation, and their historical relationship with their Jewish subjects, were all elements that affected their stance towards the Jewish policies of the Nazi regime. Additionally, the change in the war balance on the fronts also became an important factor that helped to shape their policies.

²¹⁵ Most of the Holocaust historians generally agree that the decision-making for the Final Solution was a prolonged and incremental process that reached closure in the period between October 1941 and July 1942. See Christopher Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 26-57. Christian Gerlach introduces December 12, 1941 as the precise date of the key decision of the Final Solution. See Christian Gerlach, “The Wannsee Conference, the Fate of German Jews, and Hitler’s Decision in Principle to Exterminate all European Jews,” in *Journal of Modern History*, 12 (1998), pp. 759-812.

The attitude of these governments towards Jewish refugees pouring into their countries, their consent to the establishment of Jewish refugee accommodations, and their tacit approval of the existence of Jewish rescue organizations within their territories are all elements that are useful in understanding the stance of these neutral countries during the war. However, there is also another factor that could be helpful in evaluating the policies adopted by neutral countries and even the allies of Germany towards the plight of the Jewish People in those years. That factor is the attitude of these countries about protecting their own Jewish nationals or citizens who happened to be living within German-controlled territories for many years. For Germans, these Jews, known as “*foreign Jews*,” were a hindrance to accomplishing their goal to create a *Judenfrei* Europe. By default, these Jews were under the protection of the countries to which they resided. Diplomatic conventions and the risk of endangering critical relationships with neutral countries and allies constrained Germans from readily implementing their racial laws. Discriminatory measures against the Jewish nationals of the neutral countries in the war had the danger of coming back as retaliations towards the German communities abroad, particularly in the Americas. The Germans could not treat foreign Jews in the same arbitrary manner as they treated the Jews of Germany and the occupied countries. After January 1942, in the aftermath of the Wannsee Conference and decision for a total extermination policy, it became more crucial for Germans to label, intern and deport foreign Jews toward implementing an “efficient and frictionless operation of the Final Solution.”²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Christopher Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*. (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers), p. 102.

4.1.3 France and Foreign Jews

Foreign Jews posed an important problem, especially in France, due to their relatively high number and well-rooted socio-economic status. Indeed, beginning from the 1880s, due to the tolerant and cosmopolitan policies of the Third Republic, France served for decades as an asylum for a vast number of refugees, mostly Jewish, from the eastern world.²¹⁷ As a result, from the 1880s to 1939, the total number of Jews in the country nearly quadrupled. This growth reflected the impact of immigration rather than growth of the existing French-Jewish population. In Paris itself, the Jewish population of around 40,000 in 1880 reached at least 150,000 in the 1930s with about 110,000 newcomers. Of these immigrants, those who came to the country after 1918 were the biggest majority by far.²¹⁸ Indeed, as the results of the German-decreed census of 1940 reflected, about half of the approximately 330,000 Jews in France were foreign-born.²¹⁹

Following the defeat of France in June 1940, the Nazi regime rapidly occupied northern France, and a puppet French government was established in the southern part of the country, with the city of Vichy being its administrative capital. The Nazi regime quickly found ready zealous collaborators ready to implement its anti-Semitic policies in both parts of the country. The first step was to exclude Jews from political activities. This step was followed by social ostracism and economic despoliation, ultimately leading to compulsory labor, forced

²¹⁷ Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton. *Vichy France and the Jews*. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), p. xii.

²¹⁸ Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, The French, and the Jews*. (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p. 19.

²¹⁹ Marrus and Paxton, p. xiv. Pre-war French legislation granted citizenship to newborns in the country “by parental declaration at birth.” See Zuccotti, p. 99.

emigration,²²⁰ and internment in special camps. In spring 1942, a new implementation complemented this policy. Jews began to be deported to extermination camps in Poland. Until the liberation of France in August 1945, of the approximately 76,000 Jews deported, only about three percent survived.²²¹

In the beginning, it was psychologically easier for the French authorities to start the deportations with non-French Jews. The German military command in Paris did not want to risk the eager collaboration of the French, and in spite of the opposition of the German High Security Office (RSHA), preferred not to insist on the arrest of French Jews.²²² Nevertheless, Germans experienced no problem with the deportation of a larger part of these non-French Jews, who were known as “*stateless Jews*.” These people were refugees from Germany, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Danzig, the Saar and the Soviet Union²²³ who had lost all their legal status after their countries became part of the Nazi Empire. Newly promulgated regulations also enlarged the number of stateless Jews. In July 1940, shortly after its establishment, the Vichy government founded a commission to review all grants of French citizenship awarded under the liberalized law of August 10, 1927. Within the next three years, the commission revoked the French citizenship of 7,055 Jews.²²⁴ Furthermore, all married men and families who had arrived in France after January 1, 1936 and male bachelors after January 1, 1933, regardless of their status and country of origin, without exception were regarded as non-

²²⁰ From the Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State, May 10, 1941. Foreign Relations of the United States –FRUS, Year 1941, p. 503.

²²¹ Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*. (Paris: Klarsfeld, 1978).

²²² Hans Safrian, *Eichmann’s Men*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 139.

²²³ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003), p. 767.

²²⁴ Zuccotti, p. 53.

French subject to expulsion.²²⁵ However, the Germans did not have such a free hand in deporting the second group, *foreign Jews*, that is, Jewish nationals of neutral countries and their allies. As the German Foreign Office warned its ambassador Otto Abetz in France and Adolf Eichmann at RSHA, an agreement was needed with the neutral and allied countries before subjecting their Jews to the same treatment. The unique relationships with each of the neutral countries necessitated the adoption of different policies vis-à-vis their Jews. John P. Fox speaks to this issue:

Those broad considerations, [the uneasiness of the French authorities on the deportations of French citizens] determined, initially, that *stateless* and *foreign Jews* would be the first to be deported from France. But here the SS people were in particular difficulty. ... given the diplomatic consequences involved in deporting foreign Jews, the SS was bound to negotiate with *Auswartiges Amt* [The German Foreign Office] and the Paris embassy on this question, a key point of bureaucratic procedure for which Martin Luther of that Office had obtained Heydrich's agreement at the Wannsee Conference.²²⁶

4.2 JEWS OF TURKISH ORIGIN IN FRANCE

Among the foreign Jews, there were about 12,000 Jews of Turkish origin who had not taken up French citizenship.²²⁷ It would not be erroneous to assume that those Turkish Jews immigrated to France in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Indeed, the census results show that in contrast to the total population increase, the Jewish population in Turkey which was between 150,000 and 200,000 in the early

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 170.

²²⁶ John P. Fox, "How Far Did Vichy France 'Sabotage' The Imperatives Of Wannsee?" in *Final Solution-Origins and Implementation*, ed. David Cesarani. (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 196. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

²²⁷ The number of those Jews will be analyzed in the sixth chapter, section 6.3.1.

1920s²²⁸ dropped to 81,672 in 1927, and 78,730 in 1935.²²⁹ These figures indicate that an exodus of more than half of the Turkish Jewish population took place between the early 1920s and 1935, presumably due to the economic and social pressures inflicted by the nationalist policies of the young Republic.²³⁰ Given the francophone character of the Jewish educated class and the cultural and social influence of the schools established by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*,²³¹ it is reasonable to infer that France was one of the more popular destinations selected by emigrant Turkish Jews, especially by the elites among them.²³²

Notably, Turkish Jews occupied an important percentage within the entire group of foreign Jews in France. Basing his figures on the census conducted in October 1940, Otto Abetz reported in September 1942 that in Paris alone there were 3,046 Turkish Jews, compared to 500 Italian, 1,570 Hungarian, 3,790 Romanian, and 1,416 Greek Jews.²³³

²²⁸ Avner Levi, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Yahudiler* [Jews in Turkish Republic], p. 18.

²²⁹ Fuat Dündar, *Türkiye Nüfus Sayımlarında Azınlıklar* [Minorities in Turkish Census.] (Istanbul: Doz-Basin Yayın Ltd., 1999), p. 159, 168. In contrast to the drop in Jewish population, official census results show that between 1927 and 1935, overall population in Turkey increased 18.4%, from 13,648,270 to 16,158,018.

²³⁰ Corinna Görgü Guttstadt, "Depriving non-Muslims of citizenship as part of the Turkification policy in the early years of the Turkish Republic: The case of Turkish Jews and its consequences during the Holocaust" in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*. (London: GBR: I.B. Tauris & Company, 2006), p. 54.

²³¹ On the activities of *Alliance Israélite* and its influence on Turkish Jewry see Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.) Stanford Shaw's claim that some of the Turkish Jews in France "had left Turkey as early as 1921, in the company of the French army that evacuated the country following the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement" needs to be taken with caution. See Shaw, "Roads East – Turkey and the Jews of Europe during World War II" in *Jews, Turks, Ottomans*, ed. by Avigdor Levy, p. 248. In accordance with the Sèvres Agreement of August 1920, the French army occupied the southeastern parts of Turkey only, a region where there was a very small Jewish population, including its biggest city, Adana. Thus, there were very few, if any, local Jews in the region who could have been evacuated by the French army. Indeed, neither the lists prepared by Turkish consulates for different occasions nor the general lists showing the Turkish Jews who were deported to Auschwitz, include anyone born in this part of Turkey.

²³² Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry*, p. 185.

²³³ Browning, p. 102.

4.2.1 Critical Questions and Two Sources for the Turkish Documents

In this and the following two chapters, we analyze the roles of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Turkish diplomats in France in affecting, if not determining, the fate of Jews of Turkish origin in France. To this aim, we raise several questions and controversial issues, yet to be resolved: How did different historians describe the Turkish approach towards Turkish Jews in France? What were the bases of their arguments and how critically did they examine their sources? Can we make an assessment of the Turkish policies using the documents gathered from different sources by organizing them in chronological order? For example, how did Turkey respond to the threats, which first appeared in the fall of 1942 and continued afterwards from German authorities concerning the deportation of these Turkish Jews? Were the responses or actions of Turkey at that time in line with those of other neutral countries? Did the Turkish response or reactions undergo changes during the war years? What about developments after January 1944 with the change in the Turkish approach? Did Turkey really extend protection to those Jews whose citizenship status was not clear? And finally, what were the numbers? That is, how many Jews of Turkish origin resided then in France; how many were rescued or permitted to go back to Turkey?

In our search to find adequate answers to these questions, besides other sources, we will use extensively the large volume of documents that have been compiled and reported by two historians, Stanford Shaw²³⁴ and Bilal Şimşir.²³⁵ These sources will help us alleviate our disadvantage of not having direct access to the Turkish Foreign Ministry Archives. With an

²³⁴ Stanford J. Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*. (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

²³⁵ Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler* [Turk Jews]. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, January 2010), *Türk Yahudiler II* [Turk Jews II]. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, November 2010).

accurate chronological order and a carefully scrutinized analysis, these documents are a valuable source for the re-construction of the actual situation of Turkish Jews in France during WWII. Shaw and Şimşir are unique having obtained permission to examine the documents in the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After publishing his book in 1993, Shaw submitted all copies of the documents he had collected to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum-USHMM. These highly comprehensive documents, entitled by the museum as “The Stanford Shaw Collection-SSC,” constitute an important source for our study. Surprisingly, the Collection contains a number of key documents that were not taken into consideration by Shaw in his monograph.

The only two documents in the SCC that are from a later date, 1990, give a hint of an important difference between Shaw and Şimşir. It seems Shaw did not “physically” enter the Ministry Archives and did not do research personally on the related files. In fact, in the preface of his book Shaw’s explanation on this point was very short and somewhat ambiguous:

... I began a search for more comprehensive documentary evidence. I found such evidence in the archives of the Turkish Foreign ministry in Ankara, the Turkish Embassy and Consulate-General in Paris ... Obviously more study is needed in the German archives as well as in the local Turkish diplomatic archives surviving from Nazi-occupied countries other than France, such as Belgium and Holland.²³⁶

The two documents mentioned above are from Turkish chief consulates in Paris and Marseilles, and both of them are cover letters of copies of a set of documents sent from these consulates to Ankara in relation to the situation of Turkish Jews in France during the war.²³⁷ Particularly, one letter sent from Marseilles is clear about the main reason for the collection of these documents: “The documents that are in our archives of chief-consulate and *showing the*

²³⁶ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. ix.

²³⁷ From the Turkish Consulate General in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 22, 1990 and from the Turkish Consulate General in Marseilles to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 5, 1990.

protection of our Jewish citizens in the war years is submitted as a set in the attachment.”²³⁸

These two documents, which are in the Stanford Shaw collection in USHMM, suggest that Shaw, who published his book in 1993, did not personally work in these archives, but based his study on the documents that were selected and brought to him. In contrast, Şimşir who had been the Turkish ambassador in Albania and China and “an active member of the Turkish Historical Society” had full freedom of access to these archives.²³⁹ As Shaw himself remarked, Şimşir was one of the “young Turkish Foreign Service officer[s who] catalogued the Embassy archives in Paris, London and elsewhere in Europe”²⁴⁰ well before he published his works.

On the other hand, Shaw’s reference to the need for further study, particularly in the Turkish Diplomatic Archives of Belgium and Holland, should be taken with some reservation. Particularly, after 1941 there was no Turkish embassy or consulate in Belgium, and as a region, Belgium was under the jurisdiction of chief-consulate in Paris.²⁴¹ Similarly, the diplomatic delegation at The Hague was also closed after the Germans occupied Holland in May 1940.

In the following section, we present a thorough review of the works and claims on the subject along with relevant documents and testimonies. This review will be followed in the next section by a careful re-assessment of the role played by Turkish diplomats, along with a critical analysis of the effects of existing Turkish Foreign policy and activities in protecting, or not protecting, the Jews of Turkish origin residing in France from German persecutions and the fatal end awaiting them with deportations.

²³⁸ Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

²³⁹ In later years Şimşir also represented Turkey in South Australia and South Pacific countries and retired in 1998.

²⁴⁰ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. x.

²⁴¹ See from Paris Consul-General Fikret Özdoğancı to the Embassy at Vichy, November 22, 1943.

4.3 HOLOCAUST HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE JEWS OF TURKISH ORIGIN IN FRANCE

Numerous studies, reports, and testimonies take the view that throughout the war years, it was effective Turkish diplomatic intercession that protected to a great extent all Turkish Jews in France from the German racial policies, and most importantly, saved them from deportation to death camps in Poland. The most important works among them are presented below.

In contrast to the overwhelmingly favorable presentation of Turkish attitude in academia, literature and media, only one historian, Corinna Guttstadt, approached the same topic with certain skepticism. According to her, the assertions of a pervasive rescue of Jews of Turkish origin by the intervention of the Turkish Administration and diplomats were misleading. Thus, among the historians and writers presented below, she is the only one whose stance is very different from all others, as will be described in detail below.

4.3.1 Stanford Shaw and Turkey & the Holocaust

Among the studies written on Turkish policies concerning Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, *Turkey & the Holocaust* by Stanford Shaw is the first and most widely known. In contrast to many historians whose applications were denied, Shaw had the chance to examine documents not only from the archives of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara, but also from the archives of the Turkish Embassy in Paris.²⁴² Based on these documents made available to

²⁴² Engin Berber, p. 5, note 50. In this note Berber, who in his paper complains about the prohibition of access of Turkish historians to Foreign Ministry Archives, specifically gives Shaw's name as an example of a foreign

him, Shaw praises Turkey's "key role"²⁴³ in "providing protection to all of its citizens regardless of religion"²⁴⁴ and presents the Turkish diplomats in France as humanitarian guardians who often confronted German and Vichy officials so as to protect the lives and properties of Jews of Turkish origin:

Based on the fact that the Turkish Constitutional Law makes no distinction among its citizens according to the religion to which they belong and Turkey's insistence on the '... inadmissibility of discrimination between Turkish subjects of different religions resident in France ...,' the Turkish diplomats and consuls in France regularly intervened with German occupation authorities and French governmental and local officials to release those Jewish Turks who had been interned in concentration camps, subjected to forced labor or restrictive and discriminatory anti-Jewish laws and regulations of all sorts, or whose houses, apartments or shops had been confiscated or sealed in accordance with the provisions of the anti-Jewish laws imposed by the occupying commanders.²⁴⁵

According to Shaw, instructions and support coming from Ankara guided the diplomatic delegation in France:

... In May 1943, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally gave its consuls-general throughout Europe authority to act according to their own discretion and, without securing individual permission from Ankara, to give passports to Jewish Turks to return to Turkey, individually or in groups, and *even when their citizenship papers were not entirely in order* in cases where failure to act might cost the applicants their lives. It was with official governmental authorization that the Turkish diplomats thereafter regularly intervened with the French and German authorities in the difficult task of securing exit visas for Jewish Turks.²⁴⁶

historian who received a permit for such access. According to Berber, Turkish officials are giving permission to foreign historians who write in conformity with the Turkish official history outlook and Shaw who is known as a "*Türk dostu*" [friend of Turks] is one of the first granted such permission.

²⁴³ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 65.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

Presenting as evidence a letter written by the First Secretary of the United States Embassy in Paris, Shaw asserted that, in contrast to Turkish diplomats, the U.S. approach was more lax in opposing the discriminatory legislation against their Jewish citizens in France.²⁴⁷

According to Shaw, the Turkish diplomats in Western Europe, and in particular those in France, worked devotedly, even under precarious conditions, to care for all Jewish Turks and protected them from the Nazi persecution:

Turkish diplomats stationed throughout Nazi-occupied western Europe did all they could, both at an official level and even more behind the scenes, and often at risk to their own lives, to protect those Jews who were Turkish citizens, and even those Jewish Turks who had forsaken their Turkish citizenship ...²⁴⁸

Shaw's statement noted above that the protection was comprehensive, including even those Jewish Turks who had forsaken their citizenship, merits special attention. Shaw asserts that the Turkish consulates gave official protection to Turkish Jews who had lost their citizenship:

... Turkish consular officials throughout Europe placed those who had lost their citizenship because of failure to register, regardless of whether or not they had appealed for restoration, in a special category of *gayri muntazam vatandaşlar*, or 'irregular' citizens, who were given official consular protection against persecution until the bureaucratic procedures required for full restoration of their citizenship could be carried out.²⁴⁹

According to Shaw, the Turkish diplomats worked "assiduously to handle all the cases"²⁵⁰ and did not refrain from doing the formalities to benefit the ex-Turkish citizens from the protection and immunities Turkey could provide as a neutral country:

... Those Jews who had lost their Turkish citizenship suddenly discovered the benefits of their former nationality, and they began applying in large numbers to have their Turkish citizenship restored. This took time, however, since each application had to be referred to Ankara. In the meantime, these Turkish Jews were increasingly

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁴⁹ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 62.

²⁵⁰ Shaw, "Roads East ...", p. 249.

subjected to severe persecution unless they could produce Turkish papers. The Turkish diplomats responded to this situation in two ways. Sometimes they provided false papers, giving certificates of Turkish citizenship to Turkish Jews who were in imminent danger of being deported for forced labor or to concentration camps, and to those who were being threatened with seizure of their homes and businesses. Alternatively, the diplomats provided papers stating that the bearers were “irregular Turkish citizens,” whose papers were being processed in Ankara, but who in the meantime had to be considered and treated as Turkish citizens, with all the protections and immunities provided to other Turkish citizens in France.²⁵¹

4.3.1.1 A Note on the Legal Status of Turkish Jews in France and ‘Irregular Citizens’

A critical analysis of Shaw’s assertions along with the accounts of other historians will be made in the next section. But, for clarity, it might be useful at this moment to ponder on Shaw’s specific statement that the Turkish protection included those “Jewish Turks who had forsaken or lost their Turkish citizenship.” Such a treatment would represent an uncustomary, even illegal procedure in terms of the Turkish Citizenship Law of the period.

The Citizenship Law of May 1928, no. 1312,²⁵² required all Turkish citizens who lived abroad to register at Turkish consulates and renew their registration at least every five years. According to the tenth provision of the Law, citizens who did not fulfill this requirement *might* irreversibly lose their citizenship status.²⁵³ In the Turkish diplomatic correspondence of the time,

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² In his book, Shaw incorrectly gives the year of the Turkish Citizenship Law as 1935. See Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 48. Historians/writers used Shaw as reference and frequently repeated the same mistake. See for example, Arnold Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*. (Lexington, KY: Private Publisher, 2010), p. 110, note, 132, also Kivircik, p. 139. Corinna Guttstadt also pointed out this mistake (see “Really an ‘Unbelievable Story’” in *Toplumsal Tarih*, December, 2007, no. 168, p. 63) Guttstadt gives a complete list of laws and decrees on citizenship and denaturalization in her paper, “Depriving non-Muslims of citizenship ...”, p. 51.

²⁵³ The Last paragraph of the Article 10 of the Law of May 28, 1928. See *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*, ed. by Richard W. Flourney, Jr. and Manley O. Hudson. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 571. This book was referred by the U.S. Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt to the State Department as a useful source that would help in the Department’s analysis of the subject. See Report from Steinhardt to State Department, February 20, 1944. Library of Congress, Steinhardt Papers, 1393-404. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

those Jewish nationals who did not renew were designated as *irregular citizens*. Concomitantly, Turkish Jews who had done the paperwork to maintain their citizenship status were referred to as *regular citizens*.

The Citizenship Law was not the only one on the subject of denaturalization. An earlier law (no. 1041, May 1927) had a similar consequence. According to this law, “The Council of Ministers is *empowered to declare* that Ottoman subjects who, during the War of Independence, took no part in the National movement, kept out of Turkey and did not return from July 24, 1923 to the date of publication of the law, have forfeited the Turkish nationality.”²⁵⁴ Whatever the initiating reason, once citizenship was lost, the ex-citizens would become technically equivalent to an ordinary foreign person, with no ties to the Turkish Republic. The Citizenship Law did not allow for a restoration of citizenship or provide an advantageous position in future applications for citizenship. As foreigners living abroad, the ex-Turkish citizens were under the scope of the sixth article of the Citizenship Law of May 28, 1928:

Foreigners who have not fulfilled the condition of residence [five consecutive years in Turkey] stipulated in the foregoing article, *but who are considered as meriting special consideration, may as an exception* be granted Turkish citizenship by decision of the Council of Ministers.²⁵⁵

Furthermore, according to article 12 of the same Law, “the return to Turkey of all persons deprived of their Turkish citizenship was [strictly] prohibited.”²⁵⁶

Thus, the applications mentioned by Shaw for the restoration of citizenship for those “who had lost their Turkish citizenship” had no practical meaning in terms of the existing Law.

²⁵⁴ The title of this Law was “Forfeiture of the Turkish Nationality by Ottoman Subjects who do not Meet the Requirements.” *Ibid.*, p. 569. Silencing opponents of the new regime was shown generally as the reason for the promulgation of this specific law. See Guttstadt, “Depriving non-Muslims ...”, p. 50. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

²⁵⁵ *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*, p. 570. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, the Article 11 of the Law no, 1312, p. 571.

Every application for citizenship required approval on an individual basis by the Council of Ministers at the final stage, and no document provided evidence of any exceptional implementation. The investigation of Corinna Guttstadt in the Prime Ministry Republic Archive provides further evidence: Throughout the war years, and particularly after commencement of German deportations in 1942, there was *no* naturalization, but, on the contrary, mass denaturalization, of Turkish Jews in France.

In 1943 and 1944, more than 2,000 people have been deprived of their citizenship. ... The proportion of Jews among them was 92% in 1943. Of these, 92% were living in France ... The picture in 1944 is almost identical. 83% of the denaturalized persons were Jews and about 90% of them were living in France.²⁵⁷

In fact, the restoration of Turkish citizenship to Turkish Jews was conceptually against the general policies of the state. Throughout the first two decades of the Republic, Muslims from the Balkans and Turkish speaking Soviet areas were encouraged to immigrate, alongside the tacit policies urging non-Muslims to emigrate.²⁵⁸ Thus, it is questionable, if not improbable, that in spite of the well- documented governmental nationalism and nationalization policies and the regulations to enforce the Citizenship Law, the consulates would treat Jews who had been citizens as “Turkish citizens, with all protections and immunities provided to other Turkish citizens in France.” Indeed, even a quick survey on the existing consular documents reveals those Jews who had formerly been citizens of Turkey almost never became subject matter of communications during the war years. Such individuals were completely outside the scope of interest of both the Turkish government and her diplomatic delegation in France.

²⁵⁷ Guttstadt, “Depriving non-Muslims ...”, p. 56.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

What Shaw did not apparently distinguish, and consequently misrepresented in his book, is the distinction between an ex-citizen and an irregular citizen. These are two different types of civil status and Shaw used them interchangeably as if they were identical. The critical point in both of the above described laws is that the loss of citizenship was not an immediate or a spontaneous consequence of the violation of the relevant provisions of these laws. Denaturalization was a process that needed to be initiated by the authorities and was a lengthy process; it could be finalized only upon the decision of the Council of Ministers that those individuals had forfeited Turkish nationality and after the promulgation of this decision as a governmental decree in the Official Journal. Thus, individuals who violate the requirements of these laws were irregular citizens - *gayri muntazam vatandas*, (i.e. not ex-citizens) until official approval of their revoked citizenship by Ankara. As this title reflects, in this intermediate state they were irregular; but, as a matter of fact, they were still legally and technically citizens of the Turkish Republic.

Another consideration is that denaturalization was not necessarily an absolute and inevitable fate for all individuals who were within the scope of these laws. It was at the discretion of the Turkish government to implement this law that led to the revocation of Turkish nationality. For example, as can be seen above from the wording, Law no 1041 gave the Council of Ministers the power to declare the deprivation of citizenship, but did not order the absolute execution of denaturalization. Guttstadt underlines that this law, like similar ones, was “designed to deprive unwanted sections of the population of their Turkish citizenship.” Her inspection of the Prime Ministry Republic Archives shows that there were very rare cases “where the law had

been used against a Muslim.”²⁵⁹ By the same token, such elasticity could also be noticed in the related provision of the Citizenship Law of May 28, 1928: “The government *may* deprive of their citizenship ... those Turks who, residing abroad, fail to register with the Turkish consulates for a period exceeding five years.”²⁶⁰ Again, in this case also, it seems the government had the leeway not to enforce the terms of the law in a rigid manner.

Shaw’s description that irregular Turkish Jewish citizens (or even ex-citizens) received protection and immunities from the Turkish consulates just as regular citizens did, does not correspond with the information that is presented by the documents. On the contrary, as will be shown below, the Turkish diplomats in France appeared to be rather strict in differentiating regular citizens from irregular citizens and declined to provide consular service to the second category. The documents show that the Turkish diplomats may have even put some “irregulars” into jeopardy by communicating their names to German authorities and thus might have facilitated these irregulars’ identification and deportation. Below, we cite four examples that attest to differentiation between regular citizens and irregulars and lack of assistance to irregulars.

The first example is a French document dated March 24, 1942. Accordingly, the Turkish General Consulate in Paris declines protection to 29 Turkish Jewish detainees at the concentration camp “Compiègne” because they were irregulars.²⁶¹ The SSC collection contains

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁶⁰ *A Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*, p. 571. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

²⁶¹ “Les 29 personnes de religion Israelite, native de Turquie, dont les noms figurent sur la liste annexe dressée par les Autorités du Camp de Compiègne, n’ayant pas rempli les conditions requises par les lois turques, le Consulat Général de Turquie à Paris ne peut pas les considérer *comme citoyens turcs en règle*, et ne peut pas leur délivrer ni passeport ni autre document. ... Paris, le 24 mars 1942.” The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Stanford Shaw Collection, doc. 135. The Collection hereafter will be abbreviated as SSC. The documents were enumerated by I. I. Bahar since the Collection does not have document numbers. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

the list of names of these 29 detainees on a separate sheet with their birth place and years. A survey of this list using the *Yad Vashem*²⁶² data base of the Holocaust victims and the French Governmental Alphabetical List of people who died in deportations²⁶³ shows that according to the information available, except for one who was deported on a later date, September 19, 1942, 23 were deported to Auschwitz with the first convoy of March 27, 1942. Since gassing in Auschwitz started after June, 1942, these Jews did not undergo the selection process when they arrived; however, most of them perished within 40 days of their arrival.²⁶⁴

The second example of differentiation between regular and irregular citizens is a letter dated May 18, 1943, written by Turkish Ambassador, Behiç Erkin, in response to a letter²⁶⁵ from Mrs. Istirula Bali Lago who begged him to intervene so that her two sons could return to Turkey and do their military service. In her letter, Mrs. Lago attached notarized and Istanbul governorship certified family recordings given by the governmental registration office attesting that both of her sons were born in Menemen, an Aegean Turkish village in 1919 and 1920 and were officially registered as Turkish citizens.²⁶⁶

Vichy, May 18, 1943
To: Mrs. Istirula Bali Lago
Galata- Istanbul

²⁶² *The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names*, Yad Vashem, http://www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome

²⁶³ This List was compiled from different name lists that were published in the *Journal Officiel de la Republique Francais* on different dates. See <http://www.mortsdanslescamps.com/j-o.htm> Both the *Yad Vashem* Data Base and official French Governmental List are important sources in investigating French, stateless and foreign Holocaust victims who were deported from France. However, these lists are still incomplete and under the continuous process of recovering the names of missing victims.

²⁶⁴ Among the 22 arrivals of the March 27, 1942 convoy, 17 died within the first 40 days of their arrival. The longest living victim survived only three months.

²⁶⁵ Letter from Istirula Bali Lago to the Turkish Ambassador at Vichy, January 6, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 75.

²⁶⁶ *Fransa da oturan iki oğlum var. Biri 1338, öteki 1339 doğumludur ... mektubuma ilişik takdim ettiğim aile nüfusumuzun noterlik ve Istanbul Vilayetince tasdikli suretinden oğullarımın Menemen doğumlu ve Türk oldukları sabit olamakla ...*

This is a reply to your letter of January 6, 1943.

As a result of the investigation done in Turkish consulates in Paris and Marseilles, it was understood that your younger son Avram Lago, living in Lyon will be sent to Turkey soon to do his military service and there is no possibility to do so formally with respect to your elder son, Aleksandr Bali who is in “Drancy” camp since he has no record in consulates as a regular Turkish citizen.

... with my regards.

Paris Ambassador²⁶⁷

From an earlier dated letter sent by the uncle of Aleksandr Bali to the Ambassador, we learn that Aleksandr, who was just twenty years old, did not get any help from the Paris General Consulate although he demonstrated that his father was a veteran who fought both in WWI and in the Turkish Independence War as a first sergeant.²⁶⁸ Deportation lists show that Alexandr Bali deported to Auschwitz with convoy no. 45 and could not survive the Holocaust.²⁶⁹

The third example is a note sent by the Ambassador at Vichy to the General Consulate in Paris. This note shows that the practice of declining visa applications to “irregulars” concurred with the instructions from Ankara:

With all my respect I would like to present the reply received from the Foreign Ministry to your telegraph attached to the letter of 1/19/1944 of no. 72/3: It notifies that no visas will be issued to Jews and their children whose status are not in order.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Letter from Turkish Ambassador Erkin to Iştirula Bali Lago, May, 18, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 74.

²⁶⁸ Letter of Viktor Benadava to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy. January 25, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 63. Actually, according to the rules in force, young people should not have been deprived from citizenship for five years after they reached the age of consent which was 18. See from the Paris Consulate-General to the Embassy at Vichy, July 3, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 60, p. 492.

²⁶⁹ Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*, list of convoy 45.

²⁷⁰ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Consulate-General in Paris. February, 3, 1944. SSC, doc. 163. As will be shown in Chapter 6, “Irregular Turkish Jews ...” the dreadful situation of Turkish Jews in France attracted worldwide attention at the end of December. This notification of the ministry to its delegation in France amidst the aroused sensitivity has particular significance.

The date of this communication is particularly important: January 31, 1944 was the deadline²⁷¹ for the ultimatum given by the German government, for all Jews of Turkish origin to be repatriated. Those who did not obey would lose their special status and would be treated as “stateless” Jews.

Finally, a letter written by the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Consulate in Paris once more reflects the fact that only regular citizens could benefit from the protection provided by the Turkish consulates. According to the instruction given by the Ambassador, “the necessary attempt to free Hayim Barnatan from the Drancy camp should be made only if he were a regular citizen.”²⁷²

4.3.1.2 Dictum of Other Neutral Countries

Shaw’s presentation of Turkey as keener than the other neutral countries (the USA in particular) in defending the rights of her Jewish citizens and opposing anti-Jewish discriminatory policies demands reconsideration. A critical analysis of relevant documents reveals that the attitude and rhetoric attributed to Turkey was common to most of the neutral countries. For example, a telegraph sent by the U.S. State Department to its Ambassador in Germany to be transmitted to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides evidence for the American policy as of the first week of November 1940, earlier than a similar Turkish ordinance:²⁷³

²⁷¹ This deadline, first declared as January 1, 1943, was postponed several times throughout 1943. Ahmad Mahrud “The Fate of Turkish Jews in the German Occupied Territories during the Second World War,” ed. by Cemil Koçak in *Tarih ve Toplum*, December 1992, no. 108, p. 341-344.

²⁷² From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to Consulate-General in Paris. March 29, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 268, p. 387.

²⁷³ According to documents in our hand, the first note was given by the Consul-General of Turkey in Paris to German authorities on December 28, 1940 in connection with the ordinance issued on October, 18. SSC, doc, no. 180.

Under instructions of my Government, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that my Government's attention has been called to an ordinance dated September 27, 1940 ... which requires among other things, the registration of Jews and the posting on Jewish enterprises of signs indicating the Jewish character of the enterprise.

My Government is confident that the steps will be taken promptly to insure that American citizens will be exempted from the application of the ordinance in question as well as other ordinances which may be directed against persons in occupied territory on grounds of race, color or creed.

It is a fundamental American principle, fundamental in the American tradition, fundamental in the Constitution of the United States, that there shall be no discrimination between American citizens on racial or religious grounds.²⁷⁴

Another telegraph sent by the U.S. Embassy in France to the State Department reveals that the Brazilian diplomatic delegation in France had also submitted a similar appeal to the German authorities, aiming at protecting their nationals of Jewish origin.²⁷⁵ In his communication of August 22, 1941, Turkish Ambassador Erkin also mentions the Brazilian note and specifically underlines its bleak and firm language.²⁷⁶ Moreover, a report prepared by the Vice Consul at the Turkish General Consulate in Paris demonstrates that Argentinean diplomats also requested the exclusion of Jews of their nationality from racial laws, based on the same argument. i.e., "Argentinean laws do not make distinction among its citizens according to their religion and race."²⁷⁷ On the other hand, in response to a complaint demanding protection against

²⁷⁴ Telegraph sent by the Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Morris), November 8, 1940. *Foreign Relations of the United States, (FRUS)1940*, Volume II, p. 568. University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1940v02/M/0577.jpg>. A note based on this telegraph was submitted to the German Foreign Office on November 18, 1940. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*, Volume II, p. 511.

²⁷⁵ Telegraph sent by the U.S. Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State, July 26, 1941. *FRUS 1941*, Volume II, p. 510.

²⁷⁶ From Paris Embassy at Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 22, 1941.

²⁷⁷ Report from Paris Vice Consul Namık Yolga to Consul-General Fikret Şefik Özdoğanlı, July 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 134, p. 289.

racial legislations,²⁷⁸ Ambassador Erkin's answer at a rather late stage of the War was in sharp contrast to the usual rhetoric: "it is the obligation of all foreign citizens to obey the laws and regulations of the country where they preferred to live."²⁷⁹

Notably, a communication sent to Ankara shows that besides protesting the discriminatory racial policies, the U.S., Cuba, Paraguay and later Brazil also declared that they would retaliate in kind if France insisted on economic sanctions on their fellow Jews in France.²⁸⁰ A response from Ankara to such a retaliation proposal²⁸¹, on the other hand, reflected the governmental attitude on this point: "To act reciprocally on French people in our country *will not be consistent with our general principles over the Jewish Question.*"²⁸²

4.3.1.3 The Repercussions of Turkey & the Holocaust

Shaw's book was well-received by his peers, especially by historians of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Howard Reed stated that it "illuminates a hitherto neglected facet of Holocaust studies and corrects several earlier prejudiced or mistaken views of Turkey's generous policies and daring actions to help and save Jews from Nazi oppression."²⁸³ Reed, in accord with Shaw, stated that "Turkey's magnanimous efforts to challenge and confront the Nazi oppression of Jews and to save many thousands of them" had not received the appreciation it deserved. He also

²⁷⁸ Letter from Nissim Guéron to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, January 12, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 120.

²⁷⁹ Letter from the Turkish Ambassador to Nissim Guéron, January 6, 1943. SSC, doc no. 119.

²⁸⁰ From the Embassy at Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc, no. 40, p. 469. See also, From Turkish Embassy at Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 25, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc, no. 52, p. 482.

²⁸¹ From Paris Embassy at Vichy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc, no. 40, p. 471.

²⁸² From Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy at Vichy, June 109, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc, no. 44, p. 474. Emphasis added by I.I.Bahar.

²⁸³ Howard A. Reed, "Review." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Feb., 1995), pp. 127-129.

underlined the efforts of Turkish diplomats in rescuing all Turkish Jews, including irregulars, and even ex-citizens:

... Turkey continued diplomatic relations with Germany and most of the states it occupied. This enabled Turkish diplomats to act on behalf of Turkish Jews, Jews whose Turkish citizenship had lapsed or been given up- often declared to be Turkish citizens with “irregular papers or status” – and even Jews with no connection with Turkey, who were also frequently aided in their escape from Nazi persecution.²⁸⁴

The Quincentennial Foundation established in Turkey to celebrate the arrival of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire in 1492, used Shaw’s narrative extensively in their publications.²⁸⁵ Shaw’s commendation of Turkey and Turkish diplomats indeed matched the main goal of the Foundation.²⁸⁶ Nineteen Turkish diplomats on duty at various European centers during World War II were presented by the Foundation as individuals who “made every effort to save Turkish Jews in Nazi occupied countries from the Holocaust”²⁸⁷ and their names are exhibited on the Wall of Honor in the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews founded in Istanbul in November 2001. Among them, Selahattin Ülkümen, the Turkish Consul General at Rhodes between January 1943 and August 1944 turns out to be the only Turkish

²⁸⁴ Reed, p. 128.

²⁸⁵ A bi-lingual booklet prepared by the Quincentennial Foundation for the U.S.H.M.M contains an article written by Shaw in both Turkish and English. Interestingly, a sentence written in the Turkish version is not included in the English version: “All Turkish Jews who lost their citizenship applied [to Consulates] in order to be re-accepted for citizenship. However, this was time-consuming since all applications had to be sent to Ankara.” *The Quincentennial Foundation*, (Istanbul: 1992), p. 163.

²⁸⁶ Here it will be worthwhile to repeat the Foundation’s main purpose introduced earlier in the Introduction: “To remind the whole world, by all available means, the high human qualities of the Turkish people as Nation and as State; To announce at home and abroad the humanitarian approach of the Turkish people to those who fled their land and chose Turkey as their own home, in order to escape the uprising of bigotry and to safeguard their liberty of creed and beliefs, To help the Jewish citizens to express their gratitude to the Turkish Nation for this humanly act of five centuries ago.” *The Quincentennial Foundation, A Retrospection...* (Istanbul: Published by the Quincentennial Foundation, 1995).

²⁸⁷ See also the museum booklet of *The Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews*. (Istanbul: Gözlem A.Ş., 2004), p. 42.

diplomat whose actions have been independently verified through survivors' testimonies.²⁸⁸ Ülkümen has been recognized by the *Yad Vashem* as a *Righteous Gentile*.

In succeeding years, the book became a reference source describing the Turkish attitude during the Holocaust. Shaw's views were also adopted by the Turkish Government and became the basis of the official Turkish dictum.²⁸⁹

4.3.2 Desperate Hours

The theme of rescue of Turkish-origin Jews in France was also elaborately covered in a documentary movie entitled *Desperate Hours*.²⁹⁰ The movie was introduced as telling, alongside others, the story of "how Turkish diplomats in France and Rhodes acting on their own without instructions from Ankara, rescued Jews of Turkish origin, even when their citizenship was in doubt."²⁹¹ The world premiere took place on September 5, 2001 at the Florida Holocaust Museum. The film has been widely screened since then with successful publicity campaigns, presumably supported by the Turkish government, at many Jewish social and cultural events and conferences on Turkish Jewry. It received several awards, has been honored with diplomatic

²⁸⁸ Selahattin Ülkümen, *Emekli Diplomat Selahattin Ülkümen'in Anıları* [The Memories of Retired Diplomat Selahattin Ülkümen]. (Istanbul: Gözlem A.Ş., 1993).

²⁸⁹ A first time press release of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the victims of the Holocaust on 26 January 2010 reflects the official Turkish dictum: "We also respectfully remember our diplomats serving in various cities in Europe during the Second World War, who risked their lives with no hesitation to protect the persons targeted by the Nazi regime and save them from the Holocaust." In http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-22_-26-january-2010_-press-

²⁹⁰ The film was presented by Main Street Media in association with the Berenbaum Group and Shenandoah Films. The documentary was directed and produced by Victoria Barrett. Ronald Goldfarb was the producer for Main Street. The well-known Holocaust historian Michael Berenbaum who was the project director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and its first Research Institute served as the executive producer, writer and historian of the film. See http://www.lightmillennium.org/winter_02/desperate_hours.html (Accessed in January 2012)

²⁹¹ Ibid.

screenings in Geneva and Rome as well as a special screening at the U.S. Library of Congress,²⁹² and has received much praise after its screening in the Capitol to the members of the U.S. Congress. Congressman Robert Wexler thanked “the Turkish ambassador for his efforts to bring this film to light,”²⁹³ and Congressman Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor in the Congress, commended “all those associated with the movie ‘*Desperate Hours*’ for helping to elucidate and publicize one of the most important chapters in the long, dramatic, and mutually rewarding history shared by the Jewish and Turkish peoples.”²⁹⁴

4.3.3 Behiç Erkin and *The Ambassador*

A book published in the spring of 2007 once more gave fresh impetus to the remembrance of the rescue of Jews of Turkish origin in France during the Holocaust.²⁹⁵ The book entitled *Büyükelçi* (*The Ambassador*) was about Behiç Erkin, the Turkish Ambassador who served in France between August 1939 and July 1943. The author was his grandson, Emir Kıvırcık. Kıvırcık used his grandfather’s unpublished memoir and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents that were made available to him.²⁹⁶ His aim was to disclose how his grandfather was the mastermind behind the protection and rescue of Turkish Jews in France during his ministry. Accordingly, the Ambassador was determined as early as the fall of 1940 to protect the Jews of Turkish origin

²⁹² *Desperate Hours* won the Grand Jury Award and the Audience Award for best documentary at the 2003 Washington D.C. Independent Film Festival. Victoria Barrett was also recognized for Creative Excellence as the director of the *Desperate Hours* at the International Film and Video Festival and received the *Bnai Brith* Canada International Excellence in the Arts Award for 2004.

²⁹³ See <http://www.shenandoahfilm.com/dhwexler.htm> (Accessed in January 2012)

²⁹⁴ See <http://www.shenandoahfilm.com/dhlantos.htm> (Accessed in January 2012)

²⁹⁵ Emir Kıvırcık, *Büyükelçi* [The Ambassador] (Istanbul: GOA Basım Yayın ve Tanıtım, 2007). The book has been translated to English and published by the same publisher in 2008.

²⁹⁶ Kıvırcık was born in 1966, after his grandfather’s death in 1961.

who had lost their citizenship and instructed his staff to accept citizenship renewal applications from “whoever brings any Ottoman or Turkish Republic identity, document or deed, and give them a temporary citizenship certificate.”²⁹⁷ KIVIRCIK colorfully reports how Erkin instructed the Turkish consulates in France (i.e., Paris, Marseilles and Lyon) to do the same even with those French people who asserted that their ancestors had lived in Turkey and demonstrated that they had just memorized six words in Turkish: “I am a Turk; my relatives live in Turkey.”²⁹⁸ KIVIRCIK wrote that Erkin succeeded by his own initiative in rescuing about 20,000 Jews from deportation.

Ironically, a thorough examination of the Ambassador’s extensive memoir, which was published later in the second half of 2010²⁹⁹ does not contain even the slightest allusion to the instructions described by KIVIRCIK. On the contrary, Erkin’s detailed memories contain little material on themes like the Jewish plight under the Nazi oppression in general or the Turkish Jews’ dire conditions in particular. In spite of KIVIRCIK’s elaborate accounts of his grandfather’s deeds for rescuing Turkish Jews, the reality is that Erkin allocated altogether no more than 1.5 pages to Jewish themes, out of the 149 pages reviewing his career in France. Clearly, issues concerning Turkish Jews were given much less attention among other on-going political and social issues. Overall, no references or documents that support KIVIRCIK’s claims can be found therein. Thus, in the light of the abundance of colorful but baseless statements and imaginary dialogues that it contains, it might be more appropriate to qualify *Büyükelçi* as fiction rather than a historical or biographical study.

²⁹⁷ KIVIRCIK, p. 23.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 24

²⁹⁹ Behiç Erkin, *Hatırat 1876-1958* [Memoir 1876-1958]. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010). In 2009 Erkin’s memoir as an unpublished file was submitted to the USHMM. USHMM, Archival Collections, call Number: 2009.42.

In the wake of its publication, *Büyükelçi* attracted a lot of attention, excitement and praise by the Turkish press, including *Şalom*, the only newspaper published by Turkish Jews on a weekly basis since 1947. There were also articles in the international media that described how, with Erkin's intervention, 20,000 Turkish Jews were saved from extermination.³⁰⁰

4.3.4 Corinna (Corry) Guttstadt: An Opponent to the Mainstream Coverage of Turkish Jews Residing in France

In December 2007, an article, which can be described as a first of its type, appeared in a popular Turkish historical journal.³⁰¹ Written by the German academician Corinna Guttstadt as a response to *Büyükelçi*, the article was predominantly about Turkish Jews in France and harshly criticized the book and the benevolent image of Turkish rescue that it conveyed. This article was the first in questioning the reality of the events described in both KIVIRCIK's and Shaw's books. According to Guttstadt, Turkey procrastinated and obstructed taking definite official action for a long time and with mass denaturalization of Turkish Jews in the critical years of the war³⁰² she facilitated Germany's deportation of Jews of Turkish origin to concentration camps. At the same time, Guttstadt questioned the veracity of the testimonies of the Turkish diplomats in France and the humanitarian deeds attributed to them. Finally, in her article she pointed out that Shaw's and

³⁰⁰ Zeyno Baran and Onur Sazak "The Ambassador. How a Turkish diplomat saved 20,000 Jews during the Holocaust?" *The Weekly Standard*. February 16, 2009, Volume 014, Issue 21. http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication_details&id=6009 See also, Eyüp Erdoğan "Turks saved Jews from Nazi Holocaust" The international Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, <http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/highlights/turks-saved-jews-nazi/http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/press/turks-saved-jews-nazi.5124.htm>. (Accessed in January 2012).

³⁰¹ Guttstadt, "Really an 'Unbelievable Story,'" pp. 56- 65.

³⁰² On denaturalization policies of Turkey in war years see Guttstadt's earlier paper, "Depriving non- Muslims of Citizenship ...".

Kıvırcık's concerns were not to present what really happened to the Jews of Turkish origin in Nazi controlled France, but instead to use them as opportunities for praising and exalting Turkey and the alleged bravery of her diplomats. For Guttstadt, *Büyükelçi* was not only unreliable, but a disservice to the historical community due to its fabricated content.

Nevertheless, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, Guttstadt adopted a more conciliatory tone in her interpretation of Turkey's involvement in the transportation of about 400 Turkish Jews in France in the year 1944 and the U.S. Ambassador's role in the realization of this operation.

In 2008, Guttstadt published a comprehensive monograph on the experience and fate of Turkish Jews living in different parts of German-controlled Europe during the Holocaust.³⁰³ The account of Turkish Jews living in France during the war years is an important part of her book, as she presented an elaborated and detailed version of the findings she reported in her earlier papers.³⁰⁴

In the same month of publication of Guttstadt's article (December, 2007), Ayşe Hür, a historian and a columnist in the Turkish newspaper *Taraf*, also harshly criticized the book *Büyükelçi* in her column.³⁰⁵ Hür, using the arguments introduced by Guttstadt, described the whole story that Ambassador Erkin rescued 20,000 Jews as a hoax. She ended her article by acknowledging that Turkey's strict immigration policy was common in the war years; thus, there was no need to feel embarrassed about it. However, she added, "this could be valid as long as

³⁰³ Corinna (Corry) Guttstadt, *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*. (Berlin: Assoziation A, 2008).

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 33-410.

³⁰⁵ Ayşe Hür, "The Legends of Turkish Schindlers" in *Taraf*, 16.12.2007.

there is no fabrication of false stories and fake bravery accounts over the agonies of the Holocaust victims.”³⁰⁶

4.3.5 Arnold Reisman’s Approach

In late 2009, Arnold Reisman, a research historian came forward with an allegedly new perspective. An excerpt below summarizes his point of view:

During WWII, Turkish diplomats saved Turkish Jews living in France from certain death, a fact of which the Anglophone world was ignorant until Stanford Shaw first revealed the historical data in 1995... Mistakenly, however, Shaw attributed the actions of Turkey’s legations in France to a well-articulated policy created by the Turkish government in Ankara, when in fact these brave acts of heroism were devised by the diplomats themselves ... the intervention on behalf of French Jews with Turkish origins was not the policy of the Government of Turkey at all but the determined undertaking of members of the Turkish diplomatic corps in France who acted on their own against the extant policy of their government.³⁰⁷

Actually, Reisman’s point of view, that the independent initiatives of diplomats were made despite opposing governmental policies, had been articulated verbatim in the introductory description of *Desperate Hours*.³⁰⁸ However, for Reisman who shared Shaw’s presumptions³⁰⁹ in all earlier publications,³¹⁰ this position was quite a shift. In this paper, Reisman emphasized in particular the extraordinary role of Ambassador Erkin as the head of the Turkish legation in France and stated that under Erkin’s direction, the Turkish diplomatic corps’ members “risked

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Arnold Reisman, “Turkey and Turkish Jews in France: 1940-1944,” p. 1-2, in

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1488296 (Accessed in January 2012.)

³⁰⁸ See page 15.

³⁰⁹ “... this presumption [Turkey had a key role in rescue of Turkish origin Jews in France] has been held by *all writers on the subject and yes, until now, by this author.*” See Reisman, “Turkey and Turkish Jews in France,” p. 2. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

³¹⁰ See Reisman “Turkey and Turkish Jews,” note 8, for a complete list of publications of Reisman on this subject.

the wrath and ire of their own government as well as Germany and Vichy France.”³¹¹ He further asserted that it was because of Erkin’s rescue efforts and after great pressure from Germany that “Ambassador Erkin was recalled to Ankara and consequently *the rate at which Jews were repatriated to Turkey was greatly diminished.*”³¹²

In August 2010, Reisman published a new book, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, on the same subject,³¹³ where he reiterated his previously published views. In the book which was dedicated to Ambassador Erkin, Erkin was introduced as the “leader of the Turkish legation” in France who “personally arranged”³¹⁴ the rescue of “thousands of French Jews of Turkish heritage.”³¹⁵ He further asserted that the Ambassador and his staff deserved “to be recognized as Righteous Gentiles even if it means that *Yad Vashem* will have to change its rules of how the selections are made.”³¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Reisman frequently referred in his book to accounts from Kivırcık’s book, *The Ambassador*, as if these were historical facts.³¹⁷ He

³¹¹ Ibid, p. 3.

³¹² Ibid. Emphasis is added by I. I. Bahar. Reisman states in his paper that Behiç Erkin “resigned from his posting to France on 23rd of August 1943.” See p. 16. In another paper, Reisman indicates that Erkin was “recalled to Ankara on June 17th 1943.” See “Righteous Among the Nations Award: A second nomination Brief for Turkish diplomats who saved Turkish Jews living in France during World War II” in <http://ssm.com/abstract=1520460>, p. 32. Erkin’s memoir contradicts both dates. Erkin states that, on April 29, 1943, in the absence of a notification informing him of the renewal of his position in the already arrived diplomatic pouch (was the practice in the last three years), he understood that his term of office would not be extended after July 1943, and he left France on July 31, 1943. (Erkin, *Memoirs*, p. 531, the USHMM). The organized number of convoys of Turkish Jewish citizens to Turkey and their departure dates disproves completely Reisman’s claim that “*the rate at which Jews were repatriated to Turkey was greatly diminished*” after Erkin left France. See Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.

³¹³ Arnold Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*. (Lexington, KY: Private Publisher, 2010).

³¹⁴ Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 122.

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. iv.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. viii. Among the Turkish diplomats, Selahattin Ülkümen, the Consul-General of Rhodes was the only one who was given the “Righteous among the Nations” recognition by *Yad Vashem*. In conformity with *Yad Vashem* regulations, his courageous acts saving Jews when the island was under German occupation was well-verified with the testimonies of the witnesses who were rescued by him.

³¹⁷ Ibid., As examples, p. 110, 113, 132, 226.

emphasized the view that the Ambassador's deeds applied to all "Jews with Turkish connections,"³¹⁸ i.e., including the *irregulars and ex-citizens*.³¹⁹

In this book, Reisman put forward even more strongly a claim that he introduced in his earlier papers:³²⁰

When the Nazis occupied France in 1940, there were approximately 350,000 Jews living in the country of which roughly 20,000 were of Turkish origin. By the war's end, the Nazis had killed 87,500 French Jews of whom 1,600 were of Turkish origin. A French Jew without Turkish roots had a 3.7 greater chance of having perished in Hitler's ovens than did his French cohorts who had some Turkish connection. It was not by chance or luck that percentage wise so few Turkish Jews were taken to the death camps the others survived because the Turkish legation, headed by Ambassador Erkin, did everything in its power to save them.³²¹

4.3.6 Bilâl Şimşir, Turk Jews and Turk Jews II

Turk Jews, published in early 2010, brought a new dimension to the existing arguments.³²² The writer, Bilâl N. Şimşir, is a retired Turkish diplomat whose career spanned 38 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As an old member of the diplomatic corps and a prolific writer defending Turkish causes, Şimşir did not apparently experience any restriction in searching the Foreign Ministry Archives. In fact, as stated earlier, from Shaw's mention of him in the preface of his book, we understand that Şimşir took an active role in "cataloguing the embassy archives in Paris, London, and elsewhere in Europe"³²³ during his early years of diplomatic service.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 122.

³¹⁹ Ibid., As examples, p. 126, 303.

³²⁰ The assertion of Reisman will be analyzed in the light of statistical data in the next chapter, "*Irregular Turkish Jews in France ...*"

³²¹ Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. v.

³²² Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler* [Turkish Jews]. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2010).

³²³ Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, p. ix.

Şimşir's book is an extremely valuable source for researchers in the field, with a collection of 322 original documents published for the first time.

Departing from all previous writers, Şimşir acknowledged that the efforts of Turkey and its diplomatic delegation in France to protect and safeguard the Jews of Turkish origin were "limited only to its formal Jewish citizens."³²⁴ Şimşir stressed that Turkey was a state of laws, and accordingly, neither the administration nor her diplomats could engage in rescuing Jews who were not legally her citizens, even if they were of Turkish origin.³²⁵ The representation of these Jews as having Turkish diplomatic protection would thus be a "disproportionate exaltation of Turkey and exaggeration of the service given to Jews."³²⁶

In November 2010, Şimşir published another book, *Türk Jews II*,³²⁷ a continuation of his first book, as the title suggests. The first part of the book is again exclusively on Turkish Jews in France, with 77 new documents. In this book, Şimşir particularly emphasized that it was the Turkish administration who dictated the policies in France, and the diplomats could act only within the boundaries of these policies.³²⁸ In this respect, Şimşir expressed views squarely opposite to those of Reisman. He also rejected the number of 10,000 as the population of irregular and ex-Turkish Jews in France. He claims that there were no more than 100 of them,

³²⁴ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 13. In Şimşir's presentation it appears that only regular Jewish citizens were accepted as "formal Jewish citizens" and irregulars were not "legally Turkish citizens." See also Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 11.

³²⁵ Ibid. p. 15. *Türkiye yalnız kendi vatandaşlarını koruyabiliyordu. ... Koruyuculuk ve himaye hakkı, Türk vatandaşı ile sınırlıydı. ... Türkiye, üzerlerinde hiçbir hakkı hukuku olmayan insanları korumaya kalkışması ... hukuk dışına çıkmak, hukutan sapmak olurdu. ... Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti, hukuk dışına çıkamazdı ve çıkmamıştır. Yani Türkiye, o nazik günlerde Türk vatandaşı olmayan yahudileri korumaya kalkışamazdı ve kalkışmamıştır.*

³²⁶ Ibid., p. 16. *...birileri Türkiye'yi fazlasıyla yüceltmeye kalkmakta, Türkiye'nin Yahudilere hizmetlerini abartmaktadır.*

³²⁷ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*- [Turkish Jews II] (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, November 2010)

³²⁸ Ibid., p. 13 and note 35, p. 51.

and that Ankara wisely resisted the worldwide “Jewish conspiracy” that was pressuring Turkey to accept these 10, 000 Jews who were not Turkish but allegedly of Spanish origin.³²⁹

4.3.7 The Turkish Passport

In spring 2011, a new documentary film representing how Turkish Jews living abroad were saved with the efforts of Turkish diplomats was launched. The film was a production of the Turkish company *Interfilm* and made its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on May 18.³³⁰ The premiere was organized by an institution entitled *Alladdin Project*³³¹ in partnership with the Jewish Community of Turkey and the French Committee for *Yad Vashem*. The documentary was realized with a considerable budget of \$1.5 million and was filmed with the help of a rich casting effort in six different countries.³³² The commercial screening of the film began in 31 theaters in 15 Turkish cities in the third week of October 2011.

Although the film was introduced as telling “the story how Turkish diplomats in several European countries saved numerous Jews during the Second World War,”³³³ apparently, other than an episode on the Rhodes’ consul, Selahattin Ülkümen, whose rescue of about 200 Jews was recognized by *Yad Vashem* by a “*Righteous Gentile*” award, the majority of the film is on the alleged rescue of Turkish Jews from France. Based on the testimonies of Turkish Jews who

³²⁹ Ibid., p 62-65. On analysis of the claim that these 10,000 Jews were not Turkish in origin but Spanish see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.

³³⁰ <http://www.projetaladin.org/en/en-passport.html>.

³³¹ The *Alladdin Project* aims to institute a friendly dialogue between Jews and Muslims by building bridges of knowledge between them. See <http://www.projetaladin.org/en/a-call-to-conscience.html>

³³² *Reportare*, July 31, 2011.

³³³ “The Turkish Passport-Synopsis” in

<http://www.interfilmistanbul.com.tr/icerik.asp?IID=11&konu=SpecialProjects> (Accessed in January 2012)

were able to return to Turkey with the convoys organized mostly after February 1944 and long years of archival work that the producers claimed was done in various archives,³³⁴ the film was introduced as “The only Holocaust Story with a Happy Ending.”³³⁵ The film gives the message that during World War II, against the background of barbarity that dominated Europe, Turkish diplomats put their careers and lives at risk to save Jewish people, even those who were not of Turkish origin, and the world does not know enough about it. According to this message, those forgotten heroes should get the recognition and honors they deserve because these diplomats “did not only save the lives of Turkish Jews but they also rescued foreign Jews condemned to certain death by giving them Turkish Passports. In this dark period of history, their actions lit the candle of hope and allowed these people to travel to Turkey, where they found light.”³³⁶ *The Turkish Passport* is expected to be shown in different parts of the world in the 2012 theater season.

The alleged rescue of Turkish Jews in France by Turkey and its diplomats found its place also in fiction. In 2002, a well-known Turkish writer, Ayşe Kulin, wrote a novel, *Nefes Nefese*,³³⁷ where she skillfully recounted the troubled lives of a daughter of an Ottoman Pasha and her Jewish husband residing in France and how they succeeded in returning to Turkey as part of a convoy of Jews mostly without having any relationship with Turkish origins. The novel, dedicated to the memory of the Turkish diplomats of the war years, has been translated into

³³⁴ The interview done with producer Bahadır Arlıel and director Burak Arlıel in *Reportare*, July 31, 2011.

³³⁵ http://www.theturkishpassport.com/holocaust_story.asp (Accessed in January 2012)

³³⁶ http://www.theturkishpassport.com/holocaust_story.asp (Accessed in January 2012).

³³⁷ Ayşe Kulin, *Nefes Nefese*-[Breathless.] (Istanbul: RemziKitabevi, 2002).

English³³⁸ and French³³⁹ and has been published in more than 25 editions since its first publication.

4.4 A REASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF TURKEY IN PROTECTING AND RESCUING JEWS OF TURKISH ORIGIN IN FRANCE

As can be seen, Turkish policies and the activities of the Turkish diplomatic delegation with regard to the rescue of Jews of Turkish origin in France attracted the interest of many researchers and a broad audience in recent years. An issue of concern is, however, that most of these works were put together by writers or historians who were either selectively allowed to do research in the restricted Turkish Foreign Ministry archives or by those who adopted the arguments of earlier studies without concern for their accuracy. Except for the work of Corinna Guttstadt, the war years' policies have rarely been examined critically.

On the other hand, Shaw's submission of the copies of all documents he collected to the USHMM, along with the disclosure of a wealth of documentary material in two very recent publications of Şimşir, now permit us to piece together a considerable number of Turkish documents for a critical analysis. Likewise, the memoir of Turkish Ambassador Behiç Erkin, submitted to the USHMM in February 2009 and later published in 2010, further enrich our source material for such an analysis. Finally, in the rich collections of the British, American and Israeli archives, it is also possible to find relevant material on our topic, which assists us in

³³⁸ Kulin, *Last Train to Istanbul*. (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2006).

³³⁹ Kulin, *Dernier Train Pour Istanbul*. (Paris, Editions Remsey, 2009).

filling in some of the missing information viewed from a different perspective. In short, it is now possible to dig into the real nature of the events and reconstruct them to shed light on what happened to Turkish Jews in France during WWII by piecing together the above mentioned data, most of which became available only in the last 1-2 years, even without visiting the Turkish Foreign Ministry Archives.³⁴⁰

4.4.1 More on Irregulars

As mentioned above, the documents at hand do not leave much doubt that Turkish diplomatic protection applied to *regular* citizens exclusively, i.e., those Jews of Turkish nationality who made and renewed their registration to Turkish Consulates as required by the Citizenship Law. Based on two consular reports,³⁴¹ Şimşir presents the number of regular Jews as about 2,000. The size of the second group, considered stateless according to Turkish policy, was about 10,000, and they were the people in the most precarious situation.³⁴² Claims that the Turkish diplomatic delegation also strived to protect this group of Jews appear to be unfounded. Şimşir, as a veteran diplomat who had full access to the Ministry Archives, is definite on this point. “Turkey was able to protect only her regular citizens.”³⁴³ Indeed, a document presented in his

³⁴⁰ On October 19, 2010, a written petition was filed by I. I. Bahar to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for permission to search the Archives. In the petition, it was stated that the research would be done on policies during WWII in regard to Turkish Jews living abroad and passage of Jewish refugees through Turkey on their way to Palestine. The Ministry turned down the application on grounds that the classification of documents has not yet been completed.

³⁴¹ Report written by the Marseilles Consulate-General to the Foreign Ministry, 1 April 1943. SSC, doc. no. 171 and report written by Paris Consulate-General to the Foreign Ministry, June 26, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 172. See also Şimşir, p. 18. The number of those Jews will be analyzed in the sixth chapter.

³⁴² A communication written by the Turkish Foreign Minister Numan Menemencioglu presents the total number of Jews of Turkish subjects in France as 13,000. According to the Minister, 3,000 of them were regular, and the rest, irregular. BCA- Turkish Prime Ministry Archives no.: 030.10.232.564.20

³⁴³ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 18.

book, which lists the diplomatic notes delivered by the Parisian Consulate-General to German authorities between December 29, 1942 and December 22, 1943, confirms that the protection provided by Turkish officials applied to regulars only. The report contains the list of 48 Turkish Jews interned in different times, all of whom were regular.³⁴⁴

A communication of January 17, 1944 from the Parisian Consulate-General to the German Embassy in Paris shows that the same policy continued to remain in place as 1944:

Republic of Turkey
Paris Consulate-General,
17 January 1944, no. F3207

To Captain Röhke,
My Dear Captain,

(1) As agreed in our last meeting, I ask you to find attached a list of Jews who are of Turkish nationality, arrested in the free zone and then taken to the internment camp of Drancy. Not having the dossiers of these persons in the Paris Consulate, we do not have the possibility of judging their nationality status. So we have asked the Consulate-General of Turkey at Marseilles which of these are registered at that Consulate-General. Naturally we will hasten to communicate to you the names of the interned Jews who are indicated to us by our Consulate-General at Marseilles as being regular Turkish citizens. ...³⁴⁵

A report written much later (June, 1988) by İlder Türkmen, the Turkish Ambassador then in France, corroborated once more the exclusion of irregulars from diplomatic protection.³⁴⁶ According to Türkmen, the study of dossiers in the Turkish diplomatic delegation in France “has not been able to confirm protection after 1939 for Jewish Turks whose citizenship status was not regular and who had not maintained contact with the consulates.”³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 219, p. 351.

³⁴⁵ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 129. Examination of *Auschwitz Death Registers* shows that among the 15 names in the attached list, 5 were deported to Auschwitz in the following weeks.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 334-335. Interestingly, although this report is published as Appendix 2 in his book, Shaw did not refer to this report at all in the main text. Türkmen was the Turkish Foreign Minister between 1980 and 1983.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

4.4.2 The case of Monsieur Routier, Turkey's Honorary Consul in Lyon

A letter from the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy indicates that the Honorary Consulate in Lyon, Monsieur Routier, a Frenchman, attempted to protect *irregulars* and distributed certifications of Turkish citizenship illegally to these Jews in his district without the knowledge of the consul-general in Marseilles to whom he was reporting.³⁴⁸

Ambassador Erkin mentions this incident in his memoir:

The consul-general of Marseilles, Bedii Arbel, informed me that, our Honorary Consul in Lyon, Routier, upon application of some Jews who were born in Turkey, translated their old citizenship certificates and approved them. Jews who acquired this documentation would be able to prove that they were Turkish and would succeed in being excluded from the regulations issued against them. I reported the matter to the Ministry, and charged Arbel with the investigation of this issue. The result of the investigation showed that Consul Routier did not do it as an act of exploitation, but for humanitarian reasons. He was notified that he could continue to work under the condition that he should not repeat such an illegal action again.³⁴⁹

In light of Ambassador Erkin's account above, it appears that for a limited period of time, some irregular Turkish Jews in the Lyon district might have been given papers for repatriation to Turkey. But, the same document also shows that this practice was against Turkish policies and viewed negatively. As soon as the list of names prepared by Mr. Routier was sent back by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles, the "forgery" of this honorary consul, who was not authorized to write directly to the Ministry, was discovered and he was given a warning to stop such practices.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ From Fuat Carım, Consulate-General in Marseilles to Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, December, 20, 1943. SSC, doc no. 156. See also, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 19, note 3.

³⁴⁹ Erkin, *Memoir*, p. 567. Translation by I. I. Bahar.

³⁵⁰ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 19, note 3.

4.4.3 Circulating Lists of Turkish Jews

In December 1943, the “Routier List” came to the forefront once more. The way it re-surfaced illustrates how the Turkish diplomatic delegation, rather than protecting *irregulars*, deliberately handed the list of irregulars over to French collaborators of the Nazi regime.³⁵¹

On December 20, 1943 the Consulate-General in Marseilles, Fuat Carım, sent a list of 1,182 Turkish Jews residing in his district to the Embassy, as requested. In the cover letter, the Consul noted that his list was based on that received from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which might contain inaccuracies:

The names of our regular nationals, derived from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs list, are presented in the attached lists. Because of the confusion in names or some missing information, it is probable that we have made some mistakes. In fact, the lists of the [French] Foreign Ministry had no value. Because, these were mostly based on those individuals; who had false documents distributed surreptitiously by our Lyon honorary consul, whose citizenship became void, whose status was irregular, or who presented themselves to French authorities as Turkish, without any foundation.³⁵²

Upon the insistence of the Ambassador for more precise information, the Consul sent a second list on January 7, 1944. This time the list was reduced to 112 names.³⁵³ These were the Jews whose Turkish citizenship was regular according to the consular registers. Upon receiving this second list, the Ambassador took the liberty to send it to the French Ministry. He also included an explanatory note, informing the Ministry that the large majority (indeed ~ 90%) of

³⁵¹ Here, it is worth mentioning that in the spring of 1943, Ambassador Erkin’s appointment was not extended due to his age, and in July 1943, he left for Turkey. In September 1943, Ali Şevket Berker began to work as the new Turkish Parisian Ambassador at Vichy. Similarly, after June 1943 Fuad Carım replaced Bedii Arbel as Consul-General in Marseilles.

³⁵² From Fuat Carım, Consul-General in Marseilles to Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, December, 20, 1943. SSC, doc no. 156. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

³⁵³ From the Consulate-General of Marseilles to the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, January 7, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 158.

the names included in their (French Ministry) original list were not legally acceptable Turkish nationals:

Through a note of June the 2nd, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kindly agreed on sending to the Turkish Embassy a list of people of the Israelite confession, who claimed to have Turkish nationality, and wished to be repatriated. At the end of the verification made at the registries of matriculation at the Turkish General-Consulate in Marseille, it turns out that the large majority of the names contained in the above list belong to people who do not possess Turkish citizenship; the attachment indicates the names of the individuals in the list of the Ministry who really possess Turkish citizenship.

In case the Ministry should so desire, the Embassy declares itself ready to provide a complete list of Turkish citizens of Jewish religion who are in France and have, as required, registered at the Registry of the General-Consulates in Paris and Marseille.³⁵⁴

Unfortunately, neither the Shaw collection nor the documents in Şimşir's books contained these two lists. Thus, to trace the identity and fate of these 1,070 Jews whose names were communicated to the French authorities is impossible at this time.

³⁵⁴ *Par une note du 2 Juin dernier, le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères avait bien voulu adresser à l'Ambassade de Turquie une liste des personnes de confession Israélite, arguant de la nationalité Turque désireuses d'être repatriées. A la suite de la vérification effectuée dans les registres d'immatriculation du Consulat Général de Turquie à Marseille (replié à Grenoble), il ressort que la grande majorité des noms relevés sur ladite liste appartiennent à des personnes qui ne possèdent pas la nationalité Turque; l'état, ci-joint, indique les noms des personnes qui possèdent réellement la citoyenneté Turque et qui figurent sur la liste du Ministère. Au cas où le Ministère en expriment le désir, l'Ambassade se déclare prête à lui faire tenir une liste complète de tous les ressortissants Turcs de confession Israélite se trouvant en France et dument inscrits aux registres des Consulats Généraux à Paris et à Marseille.* Communication sent by the Turkish Embassy at Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 12, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 159. Translated by I. Bahar. The same document also takes place in Şimşir's book, *Türk Yahudiler*, as doc. no. 53, p. 232. However, the date of the document was erroneously written as January 11, 1943, which consequently makes it difficult to trace the sequence of events.

4.4.4 Obstructions towards *Regular* Citizens

A number of documents further indicate that not only irregulars, but also Jews who held regular citizenship status, might have had complications in securing protection from the Turkish consulates.

A letter sent on January 8, 1943, from Vichy to the Consulate in Marseilles, reveals that a Turkish Jew called Preciado Eskenazi was not granted protection due to an on-going investigation by the police department about the deprivation of his citizenship.³⁵⁵ Similarly, from a reply sent to Salvator Nahum's January 3, 1943 letter of complaint,³⁵⁶ we understand that Nahum's passport, originally issued in September 1939, would not be renewed prior to receiving a reply from the relevant office in Ankara.³⁵⁷ Nahum was interred and died in the Drancy concentration camp on March 5, 1943, two months after this correspondence.³⁵⁸

Analysis of the collected data further shows that in the course of the war, the Ankara government became increasingly reluctant to accept the return of even *regular* Jewish citizens while they were under the threat and risk of deportation—a state policy that became clear in the first months of 1943. Indeed, contrary to two earlier practices, in the spring of 1943, Turkey abstained from organizing convoys for those who wanted to return to Turkey.³⁵⁹ As pointed out

³⁵⁵ From the Turkish Embassy at Vichy to the Turkish Consulate in Marseilles, January 8, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 38. As a matter of fact, data from *Auschwitz Death Registers* reveals that Preciado Eskenazi had already died in Auschwitz on 04/19/1942. See also, From Lucie Eskenazi to the Turkish Ambassador at Vichy, October 6, 1942. SSC, doc. no. 36.

³⁵⁶ From Salvator Nahum to the Turkish Embassy at Vichy, January 3, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 121.

³⁵⁷ From the Turkish Embassy at Vichy to Salvator Nahum, January 6, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 123.

³⁵⁸ Yad Vashem- The Central Database of Shoah Victims. Also, Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, "Juifs Morts Dans Les Camps D'Internement En France –Drancy" in *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*. (Paris: Klarsfeld, 1978).

³⁵⁹ Documents show that there were altogether two organized convoys in the years 1942 and 1943. The first one was the convoy of September 25, 1942, in which there were 38 Jews and the second was dated March 15, 1943, with

by both General-Consulates in Paris and Marseilles, the convoys were actually the most appropriate and effective method for facilitating the return of Jews to Turkey. With this method, the transportation and the transit visa procedures from the countries on the route could be less problematic.³⁶⁰ More importantly, to travel in convoys was a German requirement for those citizens.³⁶¹ In his memoirs, Ambassador Erkin also refers to Ankara's ban on convoys:

I had informed Ankara about our subjects the majority of whom were Jewish and had lost their homes during the evacuation of the old port of Marseilles. As an answer, they told me: "not to send Jews by train convoys." I informed them that I interpreted this instruction not only as an answer to my cable but as a definite order. I also informed them that ... it would not be possible to prevent those who want to return to the country, particularly those who were called for military service.³⁶²

Probably, as a response to the Ambassador's comment, Ankara curtailed the issuance of visa authorization by her consulates in France. The newly imposed policy apparently created the biggest hurdle for Turkish citizen Jews and ended the usual practice of the consulates directly processing and finalizing visa applications of Jews. Instead, a new practice called for the dispatching of every single visa or passport renewal application to Ankara for investigation and approval. A communication of the Consulate-General of Paris of January 1943 acknowledges this new implementation and shows how the applications sent to Ankara created a deadlock and blocked the issuance of visas.

about 120 travelers. Communications from the General Consulate in Paris to the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, October 16, 1942, SSC, doc. no. 128 and communication to the *Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives*, March 12, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 260. For the list of convoys see List 2 in section 6.3.3 in Chapter 6, "Irregular Turkish Jews in France ..."

³⁶⁰ From the Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, October 16, 1942, SSC, doc. no. 128 and letter sent from the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Paris Embassy at Vichy, December 30, 1942, SSC, doc. no. 147. On rejection of the convoy proposal on the basis of "unfavorable due to some points" by the Ambassador Erkin see Letter from the Turkish Paris Ambassador to Consulate-General in Marseilles, January 7, 1943, SSC, doc. no. 146.

³⁶¹ From Paris Consulate-General to Paris Embassy at Vichy, October 16, 1942. SSC doc. no. 128.

³⁶² Behcet Erkin, *Unpublished memoir*, p. 542. The Old Port district of Marseilles was evacuated on 22-27 January 1943. See section 7.5.1.2 in the Conclusion Chapter.

For one year now, there have been continuous demands by German authorities to neutral countries including Turkey to recall their Jews from occupied France. When we communicated this to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were instructed that “The influx of Jews as masses to the country was not desirable, and visas should not be issued before asking the approval of Ankara.” Because of this instruction, while the Jews of all other neutral countries and of Germany’s allies have left France, our citizens could not be sent to Turkey.”³⁶³

This document particularly refutes Shaw’s assertion that “in May 1943, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally gave its consuls-general throughout Europe authority to act according to their own discretion and, without securing individual permission from Ankara, to give passports to Jewish Turks to return to Turkey, individually or in groups.”³⁶⁴

A letter sent by Turkish Vice Consul Necdet Kent at Grenoble³⁶⁵ to Bohor Haim is an illustrative example, showing how the visa or passport renewal applications of regular Turkish Jewish citizens for return to Turkey were rejected as a result of instructions received from Ankara: “Since we have not received an order from the relevant authority [in Ankara] for permission of your entrance to the country [Turkey], there is no possibility for renewal of your passport. ...”³⁶⁶

³⁶³ “*Meşgul muntıkadaki bitaraf memleketler ve bu arada Türkiye tebası Musevilerin memleketlerine iadeleri hakkında bir seneye yakın bir müddetten beri Alman makamlarının yapageldikleri taleplerin zamanında Hariciye Vekaletimize arzı üzerine “Musevilerin kitle halinde memlekete avdetlerinin arzı edilmediği ve merkezden istizan edilmeden kendilerine vize verilmemesi” yolunda talimat alınmış ve bu talimat dolayısıyla, bütün diğer bitaraf memleketler ve Almanya’nın mütefiki devletler tabası Fransa’dan ayrıldığı halde, bizim vatandaşlarımız Türkiye’ye iade edilmemişlerdir.*” From Consulate-General in Paris to the Consulate-General in Marseilles, January, 20, 1944, SSC, doc. no. 332. The translation is done by I. I. Bahar. The same document is also included by Shaw in his book, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 153. Interestingly, his translation of the instruction of the Ministry was somewhat transformed: “... the instructions which we received from the Foreign Ministry in response was that visas permitting the return of these Jews to Turkey should not be requested or granted for groups, but rather on individual basis.” A document in Şimşir’s last book also confirms this document in SSC. See From Paris Consulate-General to Paris Embassy at Vichy, November 11, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 65, p. 496.

³⁶⁴ Shaw, *Turkey & Holocaust*, p. 144.

³⁶⁵ After the German occupation of Vichy France in November 1942, the Turkish consulate in Marseilles moved to Grenoble.

³⁶⁶ “*Memlekete avdetinize müsaade edildiğine dair ait olduğu makamdan bir emir alınmamış olduğundan pasaportunuzun vize edilmesine imkan yoktur. Bundan dolayı size vatandaşlık ilmühaberi verilecektir.*” From vice consul in Grenoble Necdet Kent to Bohor Haim, October 8, 1943. SCC doc. no. 204. The translation is done by I. I.

The Turkish policy of obstruction to the repatriation of its Jewish citizens and the government's desire to have them stay in France despite German requests to the contrary, first surfaced in the autumn of 1942.

4.4.5 The Situation of the French Born Children of Turkish Citizens

In the French legal system, *jus soli* was one of the bases of acquiring French nationality. Thus, any person who was born in France had the right to be registered as a French citizen.³⁶⁷ It seems in the pre-war years, among the Turkish Jewish citizens in France, it was a common practice to take advantage of this precept of the Nationality Law and to “declare the claim of French nationality” for their newborn children. In fact, as will be explained below, the Turkish Citizenship Law was flexible on this point. A communication sent from the Paris Consulate-General to the Ministry in July 1942, for the first time informed Ankara of the existence of this practice. According to the communication, particularly after 1940, with the issuance of anti-Jewish ordinances, some of the regular Turkish citizens who had such children came to the Consulate to complete the necessary formalities and to register their children as Turkish citizens. In his message, Vice Consul Yolga particularly stated that the delegation became newly aware of

Bahar. Interestingly, Bohor Haim's son Yako Haim who was living in Istanbul also applied to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara and asked for issuance of visas to his father and mother so that they could return to Turkey. From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Yako Haim, June 1943. SSC doc. no. 205B. Another communication from the Ministry to Yako Haim declares that according to the information received from the Consulate-General in Marseilles (Grenoble), his father and mother were not mistreated at the Consulate as he complained. From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Yako Haim, June 1943. SSC doc. no. 205.

³⁶⁷ The Law of July 3, 1917 was the first law in France that concerned the right of option of children born in France of foreigners. Article III, of The Law of August 10, 1927 clarifies the subject: “Any person born in France of an alien and having his domicile in France, who will declare that he claims French nationality, may become a Frenchman. ... If he is less than sixteen years old, the declaration may be signed in his behalf by his legal representative.” See “France” in *Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*, p. 246.

this situation, but since there was not a clause in the Turkish legislation specifically describing how to rule on such a case, “the Consulate – General felt the obligation to register these children as Turkish citizens.”³⁶⁸ In fact, the first article of the Citizenship Law of May 28, 1928 was very direct in making explicit the *jure sanguinis* character of the Turkish citizenship, “Children born in Turkey or abroad of a Turkish father or a Turkish mother are Turkish citizens.”³⁶⁹ The Turkish Constitution of May 24, 1924 was also definitive on this point: “From the point of view of citizenship, the people of Turkey are called Turks without distinction of religion or race. Every child born in Turkey or abroad from a Turkish father is a Turk.”³⁷⁰ Furthermore, according to the ninth article of the Citizenship Law, only “Turks who adopt foreign citizenship *of their own accord* without a special permit may be deprived of their citizenship by decision of the Council of Ministers.”³⁷¹ Thus, as Yolga implicitly pointed out, there was no legal base to avoid recognizing the children of *regular* Turkish citizens who were under the age of majority, 21 as Turkish citizens even if they had been registered as French citizens by their parents.

From another communication of a later date, we understand that Ankara’s approach did not develop favorably towards the protection of these children.³⁷² The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not approve the interpretation of the Paris Consulate- General and issued instructions to reject the applications submitted for the registration of children of regular Turkish citizens who had been formerly registered by their parents as French. Haim Vidal Sephiha, who

³⁶⁸ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 6, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 47, p. 476.

³⁶⁹ See “Turkey” in *Collection of Nationality Laws of Various Countries as Contained in Constitutions, Statutes and Treaties*, p. 570.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 571. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

³⁷² From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 27, 1942, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 54, p. 483.

was born in Brussels in 1923 to regular Turkish citizen parents, was one of the victims of this implementation.³⁷³ In a biographical article Sephiha describes how he had to wear the yellow star on his clothes, but as foreigners his parents did not have to do so.³⁷⁴ Sephiha was arrested by the Gestapo on March 1, 1943 because of not wearing the star. Upon rejection of the application of his parents to the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris for a document to certify his Turkish origin, he was deported to Auschwitz in September 1943.³⁷⁵

4.4.6 German Pressure on Turkey: Withdraw Your Jews or Forsake Them

In September 1942, Germany informed the Turkish government through its ambassador in Ankara of her intention of not prolonging any further the exceptional treatment of Turkish Jews in the western occupied territories.³⁷⁶ It was necessary that all Turkish Jews in these territories be recalled by the end of the year, and those who remained would be subjected to all measures including deportation to the east.³⁷⁷ In return, the Germans were promising to ease the passage of all these recalled Jews through German controlled Europe by guaranteeing the issuance of the necessary transit visas right away.³⁷⁸ A German Foreign Ministry communication reflects this new policy:

³⁷³ During the war years, Belgium was under the jurisdiction of the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris.

³⁷⁴ <http://www.projetaladin.org/holocaust/en/they-dare-to-speak/mr-haim-vidal-sephiha.html>. (Accessed in January 2012).

³⁷⁵ Haim Vidal Sephiha, "Le Sort des Juifs Turcs de Belgique: Un témoin physique, oculaire et auriculaire." The conference text was sent by Sephiha to I. I. Bahar as an attachment of a personal communication. Sephiha was finally liberated from Bergen Belsen by the British on April 15, 1945. Sephiha later became professor emeritus of Ladino, Judeo-Spanish at the Sorbonne.

³⁷⁶ Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 106.

³⁷⁷ Communication written by the Turkish Foreign Minister Numan Menemencioglu to the Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, October 21, 1942. TCBA- no.: 030.10.232.564.20.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

It is suggested that it be announced to the Hungarian and Turkish governments, as well as to the Italians, that because of military reasons, all the Jews in the western occupied territories will have to accept subjection to the steps that have been taken against other Jews. The Hungarian and Turkish governments should for reasons of courtesy be allowed to remove Jews of their nationality from the occupied territories in the West until 1 January 1943. After this date, exceptions will no longer be possible...

Berlin, 19 September 1942
(signed) LUTHER³⁷⁹

It was during the discussion of this demand that the German diplomats in Ankara learned for the first time from their Turkish counterparts the identification of some of the Turkish Jewish subjects as *irregulars* and their unprotected status.³⁸⁰ Throughout 1943, due to the lack of any action by Turkey, the deadline given to the Turkish government for evacuating her Jews had been postponed several times, each time with increased annoyance. Indeed, a report sent from France to the headquarters in Germany contained complaints and accusations that the Turks were doing nothing other than buying time.³⁸¹ By the same token, the Turkish Government did not provide any written official confirmation either, implying a disinterest in the irregular Turkish Jews that the German government was requesting.³⁸²

A communication of April 1943 sent from the Paris Consulate-General to the Ministry reveals how Ankara was warned about the high risk of deportation that Turkish Jews could face if they were not withdrawn:

But, the special information given to us from the German Embassy was all foreign Jews [left in France as April 1943] would be arrested, and sent to

³⁷⁹ Document no. NG-5123. Office of the Chief Consul for War Crimes. Quoted by Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 150.

³⁸⁰ From Hans Kroll, German Embassy in Ankara to the German Foreign Office, October 15, 1942. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, note 91, p. 107. See also Ahmad Mahrad, p. 25.

³⁸¹ Ahmad Mahrad, p. 25.

³⁸² Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 156. See also Guttstadt, ““Really an ‘Unbelievable Story ...’” p. 59.

concentration camps and from there to other places. Indeed, according to the note of the German Embassy of March 2, all those Turkish Jewish citizens who would not return to their country and stay in France, even if they were in regular status would be regarded as Jews being forsaken from protection. Although our Consulate-General whose major function is to protect its citizens would continue to protect these citizens, it would be difficult from now to guess to what degree these efforts would be successful.³⁸³

Many communications written after the spring of 1943 confirm that the release of the interned Turkish Jews from French camps like Drancy or Compiègne became difficult, if not impossible, due to the stiffening German attitude. A communication written by the Consulate-General of Paris reflects this development:

Starting from August 1941, within the scope of operations to arrest and intern Jews, the Turkish citizen Jews have been collectively arrested and sent to various camps. Those Turkish Jews, like the citizens of the other neutral countries, were released from the camps in the spring of 1942. After that, our fellow citizens who were arrested by mistake or for petty reasons continued to be released upon the application of our Consulate-General to the French and German authorities. However, in the last couple of months, the German authorities, aiming at forcing us to enable the return of those Turkish Jews who were arrested and sent to camps under trivial pretexts, began to inform us that Turkish Jews could be released only with the condition of their return to Turkey.³⁸⁴

Germans were consistently insistent upon getting firm assurance of repatriation as a requirement for the release of those Jews.³⁸⁵ The Turkish government's blocking of the return of its Turkish Jewish subjects was complicating the efforts to persuade German authorities. The

³⁸³ *Ancak Alman Sefaretinden hususi olarak muhtelif vesilelerle bize verilen malumat bütün ecnebi Yahudilerin tevkif olunarak temerküz kamplarına ve ordan da başka yerlere gönderileceği merkezindedir. Kaldı ki Alman sefaretinin 2 Mart tarihli notasında memleketlerine dönmeyerek burada kalacak olan Türk vatandaşı Yahudilerin, muntazam vaziyette olsalar dahi Başkonsolosluğumuzca himayesinden sarfı nazar edilmiş vatandaşlar olarak telakki edileceği bildirilmiştir. Burdaki vazifesinin en başlıcası vatandaşların himayesi olan Başkonsolosluğumuzun her suretle bu vatandaşları himayeye devam edeceği tabii ise de bu gayretlerinde ne dereceye kadar muvaffak olacağını şimdiden kestirmek müşkildir.* From Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 59, p. 489. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

³⁸⁴ Communication sent from Turkish Consulate-General to Turkish Embassy at Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 132, p. 287. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

³⁸⁵ See various documents in Simsir, *Türk Yahudiler* ;doc. no. 57, p. 235, doc. no. 74, p. 249, doc. no. 90, p. 261, doc. no. 113, p. 277, doc. no. 198, p. 335.

French camps served as transit camps, and the inmates were under the danger of being deported to Auschwitz.³⁸⁶ On July 3, 1943, Germany took direct control of the Drancy camp. Under the direction of the new commandant, Alois Brunner, the brutal treatment and deportations were stepped-up, and each day spent in the camp became even more perilous:³⁸⁷

As of today, 16 of our citizens in Drancy camp and 7 in Compiègne are under arrest, and furthermore we heard that our *5 other citizens have been deported to an unknown destination from the camps where they have been interned.*³⁸⁸

After March 1943, until the end of the year, the Turkish government apparently gave permission, only once in July, to issue visas to 51 Turkish Jews of military age who indicated their willingness to do their military service in Turkey.³⁸⁹ However, documents do not show any convoy of these Jews. The same communication also shows that the Ministry decided to give permission to issue passports to regular Turkish Jews with the condition that their passports would be valid to go to other countries but not to Turkey. The convoy of about 120 Turkish Jews³⁹⁰ that left for Turkey in March 1943 was an exception, and how this convoy was organized was not clear. In one of the rare entries on Turkish Jews, Ambassador Erkin mentioned this incident with some insinuation:

On June 1943, when I was in Paris, I learned that our Consul in Paris, in communication with the Berlin Embassy, gathered two wagons of our Jewish subjects from German camps and sent them to the country. To me, they did well, but I also

³⁸⁶ Or, although very seldom, to Sobibor and Majdanek. Among the 77 deportation convoys, 72 were sent to Auschwitz, 2 to Sobibor, 2 to Majdanek and 1 to Kaunas/Reval. Klarsfeld, p. ix.

³⁸⁷ Marrus and Paxton, p. 330.

³⁸⁸ Communication from Turkish Consulate-General to Turkish Embassy at Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 132, p. 287. Translation is done and emphasis is added by I. I. Bahar.

³⁸⁹ From the Turkish Paris Ambassador at Vichy to the Consulate-General at Marseilles, July 7, 1943, SSC, doc. no. 155.

³⁹⁰ Based on German Foreign Ministry documents, Guttstadt claims the number of Jews transported in this convoy to be 121. See Corinna Guttstadt, "Really an 'Unbelievable Story ...'" p. 59.

heard that in this case there was some embezzlement. Was it correct or not, that only God knows.³⁹¹

In Ambassador's entry it is not clear what he refers to with the "embezzlement." On the other hand, the testimony given in 1990s by Namık Kemal Yolga, the Vice-Consul in Paris of that time could be seen as somewhat related:

I would like to emphasize that the material considerations absolutely played no role whatsoever in our official and personal relationships with our Jewish fellow citizens, as God and thousands of Turkish citizens will bear witness. Personally, I was very meticulous about this, with whatever proposals made to benefit me in fact bearing against the persons involved.³⁹²

4.4.7 What about Other Neutral Countries and Italy?

In the beginning of 1943, as the quoted communication of the Turkish Consul above reflects,³⁹³ all other neutral countries took the German threat of "either recall your Jews or surrender them" seriously and recalled their Jews. Among the neutrals, Switzerland withdrew her Jews in early January 1943.³⁹⁴ Spain, after a period of hesitation, permitted her Jews to return in March. The Spanish diplomatic activities were also effective in saving the lives of over five hundred Greek Jews "whose claim to Spanish 'nationality' was open to question."³⁹⁵ As Christopher Browning pointed out, "the Portuguese, not only agreed to recall their Jews, but indicated they might also be willing to take the colonies of Jews in Salonika and Amsterdam which had emigrated from

³⁹¹ 1943 senesi Haziran'ında Paris'te bulunduğum vakit öğrendim ki, bizim Paris konsolosu, Berlin Büyükelçiliğimizle muhabere ederek, Alman kamplarından topladığı iki vagonluk Musevi tebamızı memlekete göndermiş. Bence pek iyi yapmış; ancak bu işte bazı suiistimaller vuku bulunduğunu duydum; doğru mu, değil mi, orasını Allah bilir. Erkin, *Memoirs*, p. 542. This specific memoir entry illustrates that the Turkish Ambassador did not contribute to the organization of these two convoys. This fact refutes his grandson and Reisman who claim that it was Erkin who was in charge of rescue activities related to Turkish Jews. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

³⁹² Shaw, "Appendix 3" in *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 340.

³⁹³ See quotation in page 19 and note 121.

³⁹⁴ Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 155.

³⁹⁵ Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p. 213.

Portugal and spoke Portuguese, but were not Portuguese citizens.”³⁹⁶ As to the Swedish, other than recalling their Jews, they saw the German ultimatum as an opportunity to ask for the release of several children from concentration camps whose Swedish citizenship was questionable.³⁹⁷ Thus, as of the end of April 1943, as the Turkish Paris Consul-General clearly states, among the Jewish citizens of neutral countries, “Turkish Jewish citizens were the only ones who had not been recalled by their government.”³⁹⁸

Italy, as a German ally consistently declined German demands, and neither recalled her Jews nor surrendered them.³⁹⁹ Furthermore, Italians saved not only Italian Jews, but other Jews in the Italian-occupied zone of France by intervening frequently with the “cleansing actions” of the French police. Their persistent opposition to carry out Nazi directives was used as a reference, by both neutral countries like Turkey,⁴⁰⁰ and the German allies like Romania and Hungary in their requests for similar treatment for their Jews.⁴⁰¹

4.4.8 Yielding to German Pressure

After several postponements, the deadline for the removal of Turkish Jews was once more discussed in November 1943, in Berlin, upon the insistence of the German government. The Turkish diplomats agreed to deliver the list of Turkish Jewish citizens by the end of the year and

³⁹⁶ Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 155.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, p.157.

³⁹⁸ From Paris Consulate-General to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 59, p. 489.

³⁹⁹ Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 107.

⁴⁰⁰ From the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 13, 1943. Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 85. Also, from the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy to the Consulate-General in Marseilles, January 28, 1943, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 67, p. 244.

⁴⁰¹ Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 104-16.

to withdraw them in convoys by January 31, 1944.⁴⁰² The German ambassador in Ankara, Von Papen, warned that this postponement would be the final one. On December 27, Ankara informed all of its diplomatic delegations in the German-occupied territories that the restrictions on the issuance of visas to *regular* Turkish Jewish citizens for their return to Turkey were lifted.⁴⁰³ Consistent with earlier policies, the new implementation encompassed the Turkish Jews of *regular* status only. However, an inter-ministerial committee report shows that even among the regular citizens, there were some restrictions. Not all of them were allowed to return to Turkey. Furthermore, their number was limited to 350.⁴⁰⁴ The *irregular* Turkish subjects, whose numbers were much higher, were not recognized by the Turkish government and were out of the scope of this new decision.

As a response to Turkey's commitment to recall its regular Jews, Germans began to release interned Turkish Jews from the camps in France, using the name lists provided by the Turkish consulates.⁴⁰⁵ Due to formalities and late release of some interns, the organization of convoys and the transportation took considerable time. After long delays, the German authorities warned the Turkish delegation that May 25, 1944 would be the last acceptable date for the repatriation of Turkish Jews, and those who remained after that date would be "subjected to all measures concerning Jews that are enforced in France, and that the subsequent requests for

⁴⁰² Mahrad, p. 346.

⁴⁰³ Browning erroneously presents the decision of the Turkish government to rescue its regular citizen Jews as September 1943.

⁴⁰⁴ "The Report of Inter-ministerial Committee on Turkish Citizen Jews in German Occupied Countries." December 16, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 67, p. 499. See also, from Turkish Paris Consulate-General to the Paris Embassy at Vichy. November 22, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 65, p. 496.

⁴⁰⁵ From the Consulate-General of Paris to the Consulate-General of Marseilles, January 15, 1944, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 226, p. 362.

liberation can no longer be taken into consideration.”⁴⁰⁶ Between February 9, 1944 and May 25, 1944 eight convoys carried a total of 414 Turkish Jews to Turkey.⁴⁰⁷ As these numbers reveal, with the end in sight, an important number of regulars preferred to stay in France at their own risk. Indeed, the landing of the Allies in Normandy on June 6, 1944, led to the liberation of France in a few months.

⁴⁰⁶ From the German Embassy in Paris to the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris, May 11, 1944, Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p.202. Also see from the Turkish Consulate-General of Paris to the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, May 17, 1944, SSC, doc. no. 164.

⁴⁰⁷ From the Turkish Consulate-General of Paris to the Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy, May 30, 1944, SSC, doc. no. 176.

5.0 THE POSITION OF TURKISH JEWS AMID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-JEWISH ECONOMIC MEASURES IN THE OCCUPIED ZONE AND VICHY FRANCE

In the previous chapter, we presented a more balanced picture of actual Turkish government policies in relation to Jews of Turkish origin in France and an examination of to what degree this policy implemented by its diplomats actually played a role in saving such Jews from a probable lethal fate. We can now focus on another aspect, i.e., the Turkish efforts that were aimed to protect businesses and properties owned by Turkish Jews from racial economic measures; the rationale behind it and to what degree they were effective.

The first anti-Jewish laws that brought economic restrictions to Jews began to appear in both parts of France in the autumn of 1940 a few months after the German victory. Via these laws and similar consecutive economic regulations in the following year, Germans and their eager French collaborators were aiming for a total eradication of all Jewish influence on the French economy. Moreover, as the pillage of Jewish homes reflects, even the personal property of Jews was in danger of confiscation. For example, furniture and art collections, particularly from the houses deserted by their Jewish owners, were attractive riches for the Germans. In fact,

to bring together the most valuable of these objects in central Paris⁴⁰⁸ and then to ship them to Germany was the task of a specially constituted team working under the direction of Alfred Rosenberg in Germany.⁴⁰⁹ No ethical concern prevented the German occupiers from plundering Jewish properties. In the Nazi mindset, to appropriate any kind of Jewish possessions was an unquestionable and legitimate *right*. How Turkey reacted against these anti-Jewish economic measures in France and to what degree Turkish diplomatic efforts to protect the businesses and properties of Turkish Jews were effective will be the subject of this part of the study.

5.1 REPRESENTATION OF THE EFFECT OF GERMAN AND FRENCH ECONOMIC POLICIES ON TURKISH JEWISH PROPERTIES BY SHAW AND ŞİMŞİR

The effect of the German and French policy aimed at ending the Jewish presence in the French economy on Turkish Jews and alleged Turkish intervention are two of the major topics of Stanford Shaw's book, *Turkey and the Holocaust*. Shaw first describes how, with newly issued legislation, the Germans and French intended to sequester Jewish-operated businesses, shops and factories. This task would be accomplished by assigning French administrators whose duty was to manage these enterprises on behalf of the state and to end Jewish ownership of them. According to Shaw, Turkey absolutely opposed this German and French collaborative plan with assertions that "property of all Turkish citizens, whether in or out of Turkey, was part of the

⁴⁰⁸ Between the end of 1940 and 1942 Herman Goring visited Paris twenty times and appropriated 594 works of art from this collection for himself.

⁴⁰⁹ Zuccotti, p. 60.

national wealth, should not be subject to French laws applying to French Jews, and could not be taken over by non-Turks.”⁴¹⁰ Referring to different documents, Shaw argues that it was with the opposition and insistence of the Turkish diplomatic delegation in France that in the end, the Germans were obliged to accept assignment of Turkish administrators/trustees to the enterprises owned by the Turkish Jewish citizens. According to Shaw, in this way it became possible “to keep these properties in Turkish hands and they were administered for the benefit and profit of their original Jewish owners.”⁴¹¹

Similarly, the racial economic measures decreed against Jews in France and the destructive effects of these measures on Turkish citizen Jews was also an important subject, in Şimşir’s first book. However, in contrast to Shaw, Şimşir stated that the Turkish administrators who were assigned to Turkish Jewish enterprises as a result of persistent Turkish diplomatic protests were ineffective in convincing the determined German and French authorities to exempt these properties from harsh German/French restrictive measures.⁴¹² Nevertheless, referring to a series of applications for removal of seals on apartments owned by Turkish Jews, Şimşir states that Turkish diplomats had achieved some success in forcing German and French authorities to grant exemptions for a number of Turkish citizens’ dwellings from seizure.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, p. 119.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴¹² Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 32.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 39-46.

5.2 THE PAYMENT OF YEARLY DUES: CONDITION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TURKISH DIPLOMATIC CONSIDERATION

As shown in the previous chapter in a different context, the documents reflect that the Turkish diplomatic efforts to save Turkish Jews from racist economic measures were again limited strictly to those Turkish Jews whose citizenship status was regular. Yet, even for them, it seems diplomatic intervention was not guaranteed. Several documents suggest that particularly in 1942, if there was any doubt that the yearly dues of 240 French Francs⁴¹⁴ had been paid, applications could be put aside until the proof of payment was secured.⁴¹⁵ Yakop Aseo's case is an instructive example of this practice.⁴¹⁶

Aseo first applied to the Consulate General in Paris in June 1942.⁴¹⁷ From a later dated petition addressed to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy, we understand that Aseo was a retired head clerk of the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul, had had an ongoing relationship with the Turkish consulate since 1930, and paid all his dues regularly without delay:

I am a Turkish citizen, [named] Yakop Aseo and I would like to inform you that in the beginning of the war I moved to Nice and [while I was there] I learned that my house in Vauvenargues street no. 77 in Paris was sealed.

Although one of my relatives applied to the Turkish Consulate General in Paris [for an intervention] she was informed that no action could be done before receiving the information from the Consulate General in Marseilles that I had paid the yearly dues for 1941-1942.

⁴¹⁴ The requirement of payment of yearly dues to consulates as a condition to receive any consular service appears to be an internal regulation of the Foreign Ministry or Consulates in France since the associated law only required the registration to the consulates within every five years, and there was no mention of any obligation for payment of yearly dues.

⁴¹⁵ From the Consulate- General in Paris to the Commander of the Drancy Camp, May 15, 1943. SSC doc. no. 109. See also, from the Consulate-General in Marseilles to Bohor Haim, September 8, 1943. SSC doc. no. 204.

⁴¹⁶ An application sent by Hayim Vitali Baruch to the Turkish Embassy at Vichy also referred to the payment of yearly dues. From H.V. Baruch to the Ambassador, May 15, 1942. SSC doc. no. 15.

⁴¹⁷ From the Consulate General in Paris to the Embassy at Vichy, April 25, 1943. SSC doc. no. 30.

I find it necessary to inform you that I paid all my dues to the Paris Consulate General from 1930, the year I move to Paris, to 1940-1941, i.e. the year that I left Paris. ... Moreover, in addition, I also paid the yearly dues of 1941-1943 to the Marseilles Consulate General.

I explained this situation to the Marseilles Consulate General with a letter and asked him to send the necessary information to the Paris Consulate General. ... Recently, I also learned that some of my furniture was removed from my apartment. However, the Paris Consulate General [again] did not intervene on the basis that they have not received any information from Marseilles. ...⁴¹⁸

The demand to the Paris Consulate General noted above, i.e., a confirmation message from Marseilles was actually a requirement that was not so easy to realize. In those months of 1942, there was no direct active correspondence between these two consulates.⁴¹⁹ In December 1942, Aseo wrote once more to the Embassy. This time he gave the recent information he had received from Paris: his remaining furniture in his apartment had also been removed.⁴²⁰ The Paris Consulate General, who had all of Aseo's documents in its registers for the period pre-1941 and thus should have known Aseo's regular status, finally took action in December 1942.⁴²¹ According to the Consulate, the time delay of five months for the action was Aseo's fault since

⁴¹⁸ From Yakop Aseo to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy, October 8, 1942. SSC doc. no. 21. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁴¹⁹ On November 11, 1940, the German Embassy at Paris warned all foreign diplomatic missions to stop the dispatch of communications beyond the "demarcation line" through the intermediary of members of missions or by telephone or by telegraph. Communications between occupied France and Vichy would "have to be sent through a special German office in Paris unsealed" which was obviously not feasible for diplomatic missions. From the Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Morris), March 3, 1941. FRUS 1941, V II, p. 512. It seems the mentioned restriction of correspondence became more flexible in mid 1943. A letter sent to Aseo from the Embassy at Vichy on July 9, 1943 recommended him to write directly to Paris with an explanation that "now there is the possibility of correspondence with Paris." SSC, doc. no. 8781A.

⁴²⁰ From Yakop Aseo to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy, December 21, 1942. SSC doc. no. 9.

⁴²¹ From the Consulate General in Paris to the Embassy, April 25, 1943. SSC doc. no. 30. This communication shows that the Paris Consulate General received the verification of the payment of last year's dues of Aseo on December 29, 1942.

during this time he could not provide the dispatch of the document confirming his payment of the last two years' dues from the Marseilles Consulate General to Paris.⁴²²

Despite its problematic commencement, several communications that took place in 1943 between the Consulate and the German Embassy in Paris show that the Consulate pursued Aseo's case and finally succeeded in getting the seal from his house removed. Furthermore, in September 1943, the consulate also submitted to the German Embassy a detailed list of Aseo's removed furniture and asked for its replacement.⁴²³ The existing documents do not show whether this last enquiry was successful.

5.3 ANTI-JEWISH LEGISLATION AND ECONOMIC MEASURES IN BOTH PARTS OF FRANCE IN THE WAKE OF HER SURRENDER TO GERMANY

Anti-Semitic laws and economic sanctions immediately began to appear in France in the first months after its surrender to Germany. In fact, a new dual administrative system was quickly established in the wake of the German victory, and with their dictatorial character, these two administrations had limitless power to enact whatever measures they desired.

On June 22, 1940, just 8 days after the occupation of Paris by German troops and 6 days after the establishment of a new French government with Marshal Pétain as its Prime Minister,

⁴²² Ibid. *Yakop Aseo her ne kadar Temmuz 1942 de gönderdiği bir kartla ve Paris 'de bulunan bir akrabası vasıtası ile de başkonsolosluğumuza kaydını yaptırdığı hakkında müracatta bulunmuş isede kendisinin Marsilya Başkonsolosluğumuzda kaydını yaptırdığı hakkında istediğimiz vesikayı göndermemiş ve ancak doğrudan doğruya talebimiz üzerine Marsilya başkonsolosluğu 29.12. 1942 tarihli kart ile muamileyhin durumunun muntazam olduğunu bildirmiştir.*

⁴²³ From the Consulate General in Paris to the German Embassy in Paris, September 2, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 141, p. 294.

France signed an armistice with Nazi Germany. As an outcome of the armistice, the larger occupied northern part of the country was left to the administration of the German military governor, while in the southern part a new puppet government known as the Vichy Government was established under the leadership of Petain. On July 9 and 10, 1940 with the support of the political establishment that was left, Pétain declared himself Chief of the French State.⁴²⁴ A newly issued constitutional act granted him extensive legislative and executive authority. According to the armistice, the Vichy government had sovereignty over the entire country. Nevertheless, in practice, Vichy enacted decrees were valid in the occupied zone only so long as they did not conflict with German policies.⁴²⁵ The German establishment was composed of three components, and in coordination they governed occupied France as they wished with their own regulations. The first component was the “German Embassy in Paris.” Otto Abetz, who was head of the embassy, represented the Foreign Office and was in charge of all political questions. It was his responsibility to deal with diplomatic delegations of foreign countries whenever a problem arose. Abetz’s authority in political matters and Jewish affairs was shared with the military administration and the Paris Sipo-SD (Security Police and Security Service of Reinhard Heydrich’s RSHA).⁴²⁶

Following the Nazi approach taken in 1933 when the nationalist socialist party-NSDAP came to power; defining who was a Jew became one of the first tasks of the Germans in the occupied zone. An ordinance decreed on September 27, 1940 declared the definition of Jewishness and new measures that would differentiate Jews from the others. According to the ordinance, the word *Juif* would be stamped on identity cards and every Jewish owned or operated

⁴²⁴ Zuccotti, p. 42.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Browning, p. 88.

business was required to display a poster both in German and French reading “Jewish enterprise.”⁴²⁷ Moreover, Jews were required to register themselves within one month to the sub-prefecture of the district wherever they lived. In particular, this last clause of the ordinance created disastrous repercussions in the following months and years because it provided the Germans with exact information about the Jewish population in the occupied zone, their addresses as well as their ethnic origins. As stated by Zuccotti, “in a country where religion was not recorded in census data since 1872,” the data collected by the October 1940 registration “formed the basis of the lists used during all future roundups for deportation ... Individuals and families who might have lived out the war undetected as Jews became permanent targets as soon as they registered.”⁴²⁸

The discriminatory clauses of the first anti-Jewish German ordinance echoed throughout Vichy France without delay. Just six days after its issuance in the occupied zone, on October 3 the *Statut des Juifs* also defined who was a Jew. Interestingly, the Vichy definition of Jewishness was broader than what was applied in the occupied zone. Unlike the German definition, which included anyone with three grandparents “of Jewish race,” the *Statut* decreed that any individual having two Jewish grandparents was a Jew.⁴²⁹ The decree also included prohibitions against Jews serving in a wide range of public offices and in professions related to the newspaper and motion picture industries. Another law, issued the following day, brought new measures specifically applying to Jewish foreigners in France. Prefects were provided with the power to

⁴²⁷ From the Chargé in France (Matthews) to the Secretary of State, October 4, 1940. FRUS, 1940 v2, p. 565.

⁴²⁸ Zuccotti, p. 56.

⁴²⁹ The German Citizenship Law of November 1935 also defined a Jew as anyone descended from at least three grandparents from a Jewish race. The descendants of two Jewish grandparents were regarded as Jewish *Mischling* which was another category. See Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader*, p. 46. Zuccotti suggests that the French Law was probably prepared before the issuance of the German version of definition of Jewishness. In June 1944, with a change, Vichy France adopted to a great extent the German version. See Zuccotti, p. 60.

intern such Jews in special concentration camps and assign them to a “forced residence.”⁴³⁰ Although enacted later, the obligation for Jews to register themselves was also put in practice. The decree published in the *Journal Officiel* of June 14, 1941 ordered “the registration of all Jews [in Vichy France] within one month’s time and provided penalties of imprisonment and fines, or both, for persons who failed to comply with this requirement.”⁴³¹

In the remaining months of 1940, new anti-Jewish ordinances continued to be decreed in both parts of France. On October 18 the Germans published an ordinance with the aim to end any Jewish role in the economy through the “Aryanization” of all Jewish enterprises in the occupied zone. According to the ordinance, Jews could no longer run their own businesses and newly appointed “Aryan” administrators, *administrateurs provisoires*, would be in charge of their enterprises. The message below from U.S. Secretary of State, Cornell Hull, summarizes the function of these commissioners/administrators and the aim of the ordinance:

From the moment the Commissioner assumes charge he and he alone is responsible for the management of the enterprise with respect to the occupying authorities. His administrative practices are extensive and supersede the prerogatives of the owner or former management. ... The first object [of the commissioner] shall be to “Aryanize” the enterprise and to eliminate from it all Jewish influence. Jewish owners are permitted to sell their enterprises to Aryan French nationals. Transfer must be effected within a very brief time but if for any reason sale is not consummated ‘within a very short’ unspecified period, or in the event of a refusal to sell, the Commissioner is required without further delay to affect the sale or liquidation of the enterprise. The Jewish character of the enterprise ceases upon the assumption of the control by the Commissioner and notice to this effect is posted on the establishment to replace an earlier notice of Jewish ownership.⁴³²

A later German ordinance of April 26, 1941 brought further strict and harsh conditions to the process of liquidating Jewish enterprises:

⁴³⁰ From the U.S. Chargé in France (Matthews) to the Secretary of State, October 18, 1940. FRUS, 1940 v2, p. 566.

⁴³¹ From the U.S. Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State, June 16, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p. 508.

⁴³² From Secretary of State Cornell Hull to the U.S. Chargé in Germany (Morris), January 11, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p. 503.

... the new ordinance was intended to put an end to the trade done by Jews which definitely had not been stopped despite the liquidation procedure. ... while up to now the income and proceeds of liquidation had been paid to owners by the administrative commissioners, henceforth they would receive only “indispensable subsidies” even when an enterprise is totally liquidated. ...⁴³³

According to this German ordinance, all Jewish enterprises must be closed before May 20, 1941; thus, no Jewish economic activity would be possible openly after this date.⁴³⁴

Reacting to the German ordinance of October 1940, the Vichy regime quickly set up the *Service de Contrôle des Administrateurs Provisoires* (SCAP) in Paris in order to secure that the administrators or trustees to be appointed were all French. The concern of the French regime was not to protect Jewish property, but rather not to lose the benefits of the new economic policies to the Germans. For the French administration, Jewish properties were considered elements of their national economy which should not fall into the hands of the Germans or any other foreigners. In this way, “the Jews’ role in the French economy would be diminished, but France would not lose the properties that had once belonged to them.”⁴³⁵ For the Germans, encouraging the French to participate fully in the Aryanization process was also important in order to show the presence of willing French cooperation in the matter and to “avoid the impression that the Germans only want to take the Jews’ places.”⁴³⁶ In March 1941, again, with similar anxieties about sovereignty and a desire to exclude Germans from the seizure of Jewish wealth,⁴³⁷ the Vichy government

⁴³³ From the Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State, May 12, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p. 506.

⁴³⁴ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Embassy in Vichy, May 10, 1941. *Şimşir Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 13, p. 449. Also from the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 28, 1941. *Şimşir Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 16, p. 452.

⁴³⁵ Marrus and Paxton, p. 8.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴³⁷ The abrupt decision to sequester all Rothschild properties in France on January 11, 1941 by the Vichy Regime is an example showing how the French were sensitive about any kind of manifestation of German interest to take part in the acquisition of Jewish assets in France. The decision was given in the afterwards of the German confiscation of Rothschild shares of “Witkowitz,” a major steel enterprise in Czechoslovakia from a depot at Neves by shoving the

established the *Comissariat General aux Questions Juives* (CGQJ), a centralized bureau that would be active in both parts of France to deal with Jewish questions, particularly on economic matters having to do with Aryanization and seizure of Jewish properties. Finally, on July 22, 1941, the Vichy government extended the German implementation of economic expropriation of Jewish property fully to the unoccupied zone.⁴³⁸ In all these anti-Semitic policies, the Vichy regime acted zealously, according to its own initiative wholly without German coercion, and often their “home-grown program rivaled what Germans were doing in the occupied north and even, in some respects, went beyond it.”⁴³⁹

5.4 REACTION OF THE NEUTRAL COUNTRIES TO ANTI-JEWISH LEGISLATION

As the diplomatic correspondence of the period shows, the anti-Semitic legislation issued in both parts of France became important subject matter for both non-belligerent countries and allies of Germany. How to react to these ordinances, what should be the status of their Jewish subjects vis-à-vis the new legislation and who would own the economic wealth left by deported foreign Jews were questions with which the diplomatic corps in France had to deal.

In the beginning, as a first reaction, it seems the diplomats were not inclined to oppose the newly decreed anti-Jewish ordinances. Since these Jewish subjects were willingly living in France, then, they should obey the country’s laws and regulations without exception was the

French guards aside physically on January 8. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 107.

⁴³⁸ Zuccotti, p. 60.

⁴³⁹ Marrus and Paxton, p. xii.

rationale behind their assent. A communication sent by the U.S. Chargé in France to the Secretary of State just after the issuance of the first, September 27, 1940 ordinance was indicative of just such an attitude of the most important neutral country at the time:

As the measure is a military ordinance issued in occupied territory, I am of the opinion that there is only one reply that the Embassy can make to American citizens of Jewish extraction who inquire whether they must comply with these provisions, namely, that as the inquirers have voluntarily placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the laws and regulations applicable to the territory there is no way under existing circumstances that the American authorities may protect them from laws and regulations that are discriminatory no matter how much we may deplore those measures.⁴⁴⁰

Interestingly, a letter of reply dated October 17, 1940, written by the First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy to the Turkish Consul-General in Paris, demonstrates that the Turkish diplomatic delegation in occupied France also had difficulties in evaluating the new ordinances and was asking for the U.S. interpretation. Most probably this letter is an example of what took place between the diplomatic delegations of the neutral countries searching out the attitude of other countries in order to give a direction to their own.

Please excuse me for having delayed so much in answering your letter of October 2 relative to the German regulation that requires the registration of persons belonging to the Jewish religion. For the moment, I answer to American citizens who inquire at the Embassy, that the latter, given the fact that they have voluntarily placed themselves under the laws and regulations in force in the occupied territory of France, can take initiative regarding them only in the case when discrimination is established. According to what I understand the regulation in question establishes no distinction, and applies to all persons of Jewish religion resident in occupied territory. If you have an indication showing a contrary opinion, I would be very much obliged if you would let me know it.⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰ From the Chargé in France (Matthews) to the Secretary of State, October 4, 1940. FRUS, 1940, v2, p. 565.

⁴⁴¹ From the First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy to the Consul-General of Republic Turkey, October 17, 1940. Referred by Shaw in *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 83. The presentation of this letter by Shaw is misguided since it lacks a proper description of the context in which it appeared.

Besides asking the opinion of the U.S. consulate, the Turkish Consulate General in Paris also applied to the German authorities and asked whether the measures of the September 1940 ordinance applied to Turkish Jewish citizens.⁴⁴² A communication of February 1941 reveals that even after five months no response had yet been given to this note.⁴⁴³

The vagueness or confusion of the U.S. attitude about how to deal with the German measures did not last long. The October 18 ordinance which required Jews to declare their possessions and established a system for appointing “temporary administrators” to their businesses, whose function would be to liquidate or to sell them, brought new pressure for a more definite policy. A rather long communication sent by Hull, the Secretary of State, to the Chargé in Germany in early November clarified the U.S. attitude.⁴⁴⁴ According to Hull, American Jewish citizens should be definitely exempted from the discriminatory applications of the ordinances issued by the Germans:

... My Government is confident that steps will be taken promptly to insure that American citizens will be exempted from the application of the ordinance in question as well as for any other ordinances which may be directed against persons in occupied territory on grounds of race, color or creed.

... An ordinance which would have the effect of arbitrarily dividing Americans into special classes, subjecting them to differential treatment and exposing one group to indignities, possible injuries and material loss must necessarily be resented by the American people as a whole and by their Government.

...The American Government believes, therefore that upon further consideration the German Military Administration in France will not wish to subject American citizens to provisions of the nature of those embodied in the ordinance in

⁴⁴² From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the German Embassy, October 4, 1940. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 4, p. 443.

⁴⁴³ From the Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy at Vichy, February 10, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 6, p. 443.

⁴⁴⁴ An excerpt of this communication has already been presented in Chapter 4, page 119.

question and that measures to exempt American citizens from the ordinance will be taken urgently...⁴⁴⁵

A consecutive message sent from the State Department to Chargé Morris in Berlin, who had felt some hesitation to submit the protesting note to the German Foreign Office, once more reflected the American decisiveness: No diplomatic rationale could delay or stop the handover of the American protest to Berlin.

After full consideration of the observations contained in your telegram under reference the Department desires that you proceed as instructed. The question involved is fundamental and we do not propose to temporize.⁴⁴⁶

Again, as with the earlier Turkish appeal, the Germans also preferred not to respond to the American protest.⁴⁴⁷

The U.S. demarche seems to have been adopted and shared by some other neutral countries, including Turkey. Later dated documents illustrate that the American rationale became a common dictum of these neutral countries in protesting the new regulations that brought anti-Semitic discrimination against their Jewish subjects. For example, documents from the Turkish archives show that Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Paraguay and Brazil also opposed the German policies in messages with similar rhetoric.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁵ From the Secretary of State Cordell Hull to the Chargé in Germany (Morris), November 8, 1940. FRUS, 1940. v2, p. 568.

⁴⁴⁶ From the Acting Secretary of State (Welles) to Chargé in Germany (Morris), November 15, 1940. FRUS, 1940. v2, p. 570.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., note 35.

⁴⁴⁸ From the Turkish Embassy at Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 22, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 27, p. 459.

5.5 TURKISH REACTION TO THE ORDINANCES ON SEIZURE OF PROPERTIES AND BUSINESSES OF TURKISH CITIZENS OF JEWISH ORIGIN

A Turkish note given to the German authorities at the end of December 1940 also contained rhetoric similar to that of the U.S. and reflected the displeasure of Turkey. The declaration put special emphasis on the provision of the October 18 ordinance that enforced seizure of Jewish owned businesses and asked bluntly for exemption of Turkish nationals from such an implementation.

The Turkish Consulate-General in Paris, based on the fact that the Turkish Constitutional Law makes no distinction among its citizens according to the religion to which they belong, has the honor to ask the German Embassy to give instructions to service authorities regarding a decision to exempt *certain* merchants of Turkish nationality as the ordinance of October 18 required.⁴⁴⁹

The Germans continued to keep their silence despite the persistent requests from the U.S. and Turkey, and presumably other neutral countries, asking for exemption of their Jews from the discriminatory measures.

In the meantime, during the month of January 1941, due to a personal initiative of the Turkish Paris Consulate-General, Cevdet Dülger, some of the shops and business offices owned by Turkish citizen Jews seemed to have managed to avoid the beginning of work by the administrators of their enterprises. Following submission of the note of December 28 mentioned above, in accord with their application, Dülger began to give letters to Turkish Jewish citizen

⁴⁴⁹ *Le Consulat Général de Turquie à Paris se bezant sur le fait que la Loi Constitutionnelle Turquie ne fait aucune distinction entre ses ressortissants quelle que soit la religion a laquelle ils appartiennent a l'honneur de prier l'Ambassade d'Allemagne de vouloir bien donner des instructions au Service Compétent pour que la decision qui vient frapper certains commercants de nationalite Turquie, en vertu de l'ordonance du 18 Octobre 1940 soit rapportés.* From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the German Embassy, December 28, 1940. SSC doc no. 180. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar. Here the term "certain" implies the Turkish Jews of regular citizen status.

business owners or directly sent letters to their appointed administrators informing the administrators that the person in question was a Turkish citizen and should be exempted from the measures of the ordinances.⁴⁵⁰ A letter sent from a French administrator to the consulate reveals that indeed, the attempt to gain exemption in some cases became helpful.⁴⁵¹ However, according to Dülger, this solution became a short-term one and was effective for only one month. Beginning in February 1941, as a result of instructions sent from SCAP that Turkish Jews were not exempt; the assigned French administrators began to re-take control of the businesses that they formerly relinquished.⁴⁵²

A communication sent in December 1943 from the Marseilles Consulate-General reveals that even after two years, the situation had not changed and the French trustees or administrators still continued to be the sole decision makers regarding Turkish Jewish establishments. According to Head Consul Carım, the consulate had not succeeded by any means in her efforts before the CGQJ to stop the liquidation of Turkish Jewish enterprises.⁴⁵³ A consulate-general certificate, given in October 1940 to Vitali Hayim Benbassa, a dentist working in Paris implies that attempts were also made to provide protection for self-employed Turkish Jewish

⁴⁵⁰ A communication sent from the Paris Consulate General to the *Perfecture* of Sartha of January 10, 1941 is an example of these letters. SSC doc. no. 409.

⁴⁵¹ From a French administrator to the Consulate-General in Paris, January 4, 1941. SSC doc. no. EC1A. In this document, the French administrator of “Au Bon Choir,” an enterprise of a Turkish Jewish citizen acknowledges the arrival of Consul’s letter and informs him that he finds the request of exemption of Turkish Jewish enterprises from implementations as reasonable.

⁴⁵² From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Embassy in Vichy, February 10, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. No.6, p.443.

⁴⁵³ From the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Embassy in Vichy, December 1, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 66, p. 498. See also from the Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 40, p. 469. In contrast to the statements of the above mentioned consuls, there were also events showing that the certificates received from the consulates did stop German or French confiscation of merchandise in some shops owned by Turkish Jewish citizens. Personal communication with Ziva Galiko, October 2011.

professionals to continue to practice their professions.⁴⁵⁴ However, a later dated document shows that this protection could not be solidified, and that it continued for a limited period of time only. The owner of the certificate in our example, Benbassa eventually was obliged to leave Paris and fled to the unoccupied zone in late 1942.⁴⁵⁵

5.5.1 German response and her varying attitude towards neutral countries

At last, after a five month delay, on March 3, 1941 the official German response to Turkish requests for exemption of their citizens from discriminative economic measures arrived.⁴⁵⁶ A week later the U.S. ambassador also received an identical letter in regard to his protest to the German establishment on the same subject.⁴⁵⁷ The only difference in these letters was the name of the country being addressed. Ambiguously, in the last sentence of their communication, the Germans implied possible recognition of some kind of special treatment for those foreign Jews who were citizens of the U.S. and Turkey. Apparently, the same letter from the German embassy was received by all politically sensitive non-belligerent countries in the first part of March 1941.⁴⁵⁸

.... They [the measures taken against the Jews by the Military Commander in France] do not allow of any exceptions and must be applied to all persons residing in

⁴⁵⁴ A letter given to a Dr. Benbassa, a dentist, is an example of such a document. The letter which was dated October 23, 1944 certified that Monsieur Benbassa was a Turkish citizen who had a registration number at the consulate. It also contains his clinic address and his citizen registration number. SCC, doc. No. 76.

⁴⁵⁵ From the Consulate General in Paris to the German Embassy in Paris, March 24, 1943. SCC, doc. no. 79.

⁴⁵⁶ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, March 3, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no.8, p. 446.

⁴⁵⁷ The German reply to the U.S. Embassy was sent within the message of the U.S. Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State on March 10, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p. 505.

⁴⁵⁸ A communication from the U.S. Ambassador in France to the Secretary of State indicates the receipt of an identical message in regards to special treatment for their Jewish citizens by the Brazilian diplomatic delegation. From the U.S. Ambassador in France (Lahey) to the Secretary of State, July 26, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p.510.

France, regardless of their nationality. They override the application of any other legislation.

The German Embassy is inclined, however, within the framework of legal regulations, to support the special wishes of the Turkish Consulate General [Embassy of the United States of America] concerning the administration, or in given cases, the sale of Jewish enterprises when the interests of Turkish citizens [of the United States of America] are involved.⁴⁵⁹

The ambiguous and noncommittal aura of the letter reflects the hesitant attitude of the German Foreign Office in Berlin. As Browning points out, German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop was reluctant to grant “favored treatment” to foreign or American Jews in France.⁴⁶⁰ However, in actual practice, in secret instructions given to field commanders, American Jews were exempted from roundups and deportations of foreign Jews, which started in the spring-summer of 1941⁴⁶¹ as well as from the economic sanctions.⁴⁶² According to Browning, rather than the Foreign Office, it was the military administration and security police who were the dominant actors in shaping Jewish legislation in France in the first year of the occupation⁴⁶³ and the fear of reprisal against German property in the U.S. was the reason for such a cautious approach. In June 1941, the Office became more flexible in the implementation of the economic measures when the issue re-surfaced in relation to foreign Jews in Germany. The heads of the Political and Economic Divisions of the Office declared their opposition particularly to the inclusion of

⁴⁵⁹ From the German Embassy to the Turkish General Consulate in Paris, February 28, 1941. SCC, doc, no. 181. Translation from German was done by Anita Ender. From the U.S. Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State, March 10, 1941. FRUS, 1941, p. 505.

⁴⁶⁰ Ribbentrop’s approach reflects a desire to shift away pre-war German policies. According to this policy, Jews of foreign nationality were exempt from the Aryanization policies. Nevertheless, a talk given by Goring in November 1938 describes the actual German strategy, “we shall try to induce them through slight, and then through stronger pressure, and though clever maneuvering to let themselves be pushed out voluntarily.” See Hilberg, p. 126.

⁴⁶¹ Zuccotti, p. 85.

⁴⁶² Browning, p. 50.

⁴⁶³ A Turkish communication also points out the dominant role of the German military command with respect to the German Embassy which was representing the German Foreign Office in France. From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, March 3, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 8, p. 446.

American Jews in the ongoing economic measures. Consequently, a more considerate official German Foreign Office policy was reshaped with the approval of Ribbentrop on June 16, 1941 and became the *modus operandi* of the Office. According to this policy, “in the question of the property of foreign Jews, the Foreign Office must continue to insist upon a case-by-case examination to check whether reprisals against German property abroad were to be feared.”⁴⁶⁴

In despite of the decision of the German Office to take a more careful approach to Jews of politically or economically sensitive countries, the Turkish documents do not indicate that the Turkish Jews received such special or cautious treatment as their American co-religionists had. For example, they did not receive a special exemption from the economic sanctions as ambiguously implied in the German communication of above in March 1941 or the decision of June 1941.⁴⁶⁵ Similar to all other Jews in France, Turkish Jews also had to declare their possessions at police headquarters and had to concede to the management of their enterprises by administrators whose final objective would be selling them to non-Jews or liquidating them. As a document from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will be shown below, clearly reflects, the Turkish government in Ankara did not have any intention to reciprocate the German economic measures applied to her Jewish citizens abroad and the non-existence of any likelihood

⁴⁶⁴ Browning, p. 51. Although Browning mentions this change in the Foreign Office policy in his description of the situation of foreign Jews in Germany, it was also perfectly valid for France. A report written by the Turkish Ambassador in May 1942 verifies this fact. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 40, p. 469.

⁴⁶⁵ As another example, during the roundup of August 20, 1941 which was one of the first roundups in Paris, between 6:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., police arrested “as many male Jews between the ages of eighteen and fifty” in the eleventh arrondissement that was heavily populated by foreign Jews and Americans were the only exemptions. See Zuccotti, p. 85. By contrast, in his unpublished memoir, regular Turkish Jewish citizen, Albert Saul who was 18 years old on that date describes how during this specific roundup “Germans and French policemen came to his home to take him.” Saul was saved from being sent to the Drancy camp through intervention of a high ranking German officer. 4,230 men arrested in this roundup became the first “guests” of the newly established Drancy camp. See Albert Saul, *Camp of Reprisals, Front Stalag 122*, (USHMM Library Collection, D805.5 F76 S38.1991), pp. 5-6.

of such a reprisal danger could be the main reason for such a dismissive attitude of the Germans to Turkish diplomatic appeals in regard to properties of Turkish Jewish citizens in France.

5.5.2 Turkish Application for the Assignment of Turkish Administrators (Trustees)

Upon receiving the details of the German reply from its Paris Consulate-General,⁴⁶⁶ the Vichy Embassy passed the information on to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked for instruction.⁴⁶⁷ The German reply did not create much reaction in Ankara. It seems the situation of Turkish Jews in France was not a subject that attracted much attention, and the Ministry did not feel any urgency for an immediate response.

After more than three months, it was the application of Turkish Jews to the Paris Consulate-General and their presentation on how Italian and Spanish consulates were dealing with their subjects as an example that gave new impetus to the reconsideration of the matter.⁴⁶⁸ Indeed, the Jewish subjects of Italy and Spain were in an advantageous position to keep their properties since their administrators were chosen from their compatriots. The incentives of these non-Jewish Italian or Spanish administrators were to protect the rights of their co-nationalist Jews as much as possible. Hence, in a tacit way they were acting as guardians of these businesses and possessions. After several communications,⁴⁶⁹ and after about five months of German

⁴⁶⁶ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, March 3, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 8, p. 446.

⁴⁶⁷ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 21, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 9, p. 447.

⁴⁶⁸ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 30, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II* doc. no. 18, p.453.

⁴⁶⁹ From the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Vichy, July 25, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 19, p. 453. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 29, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 20, p. 454.

response declaring that Turkish Jews would not be granted exemption, and ten months of the diplomatic protesting note, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally gave her consent to the Embassy in Vichy for separate applications to French and German authorities in both parts of France and to request the assignment of non-Jewish Turkish administrators to Turkish Jewish enterprises instead of Frenchmen.⁴⁷⁰

The revised Turkish policy of August 1941 and the accompanying demand of Turkish diplomats for assignment of Turkish administrators for the Turkish Jewish establishments did not bring any concrete result for a long time. In fact, as will be shown below, when the appointment of Turkish administrators eventually had been resolved, after more than a year, it was not due to the insistent Turkish applications but a consequence of new developments affecting the Germans.

A communication between Ankara and the embassy in Vichy shows that the Ministry also needed to know the policies of diplomatic delegations of countries other than Italy and Spain in France in regard to protecting their Jews.⁴⁷¹ In reply to this inquiry, after summarizing the rigid French intention to apply anti-Semitic economic measures to all Jews in France without distinction between local and foreign, Ambassador Erkin pointed to the strong Brazilian and American protests and concessionary promises they had received in return as two examples. According to the Ambassador, these promises, which were not given to the Turkish delegation, were obtained after the strong protests of these countries' delegations which also contained

⁴⁷⁰ In relation with the Vichy France, from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 25, 1941. In relation with the occupied France, from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Vichy, August 5, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 19 & 22, p. 453 & 455.

⁴⁷¹ From the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Embassy at Vichy, July 25, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 19, p. 453.

threats to impose counter discriminatory policies in retaliation on French communities living in their countries.⁴⁷²

5.5.3 Fruitless Attempts: September 1941 - December 1942.

5.5.3.1 Occupied France and the German Stance.

A month after receiving the Ministry's approval, on September 6, 1941, the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris through a verbal note, applied to the German Embassy, demanding assignment of non-Jewish Turkish citizens as acting administrators for the enterprises owned by Turkish Jewish citizens. Two consecutive communications sent from the German Embassy show that the Embassy evaded becoming directly involved with the issue, probably because of instructions from the Foreign Office. The first instruction informed the Turkish Consulate in Paris that the application was transmitted to the German Military Commander's Office in Paris.⁴⁷³ In the second, the Embassy felt it necessary to notify the Turkish Consulate that it was the Commander's Office who would investigate the matter.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, in August and September of 1941 the problem of how to deal with foreign Jews, particularly in relation to the properties they owned not only in France, but even in the newly occupied territories in Eastern Europe, continuing to be a troubling issue in different departments of the German Foreign Office in Berlin. As noted, since June the Office already had a more cautious approach to the matter. However, especially, the State Secretary of the Office, Ernest von Weizsäcker, was in favor of an

⁴⁷² From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 22, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 27, p. 459.

⁴⁷³ From the German Embassy to the Turkish Consulate General in Paris, September 29, 1941. SSC doc. no. 182.

⁴⁷⁴ From the German Embassy to the Turkish Consulate General in Paris, October 4, 1941. SSC doc. no. 183.

even more cautious approach in dealing with foreign Jews and their properties in German controlled territories. The Legal Division of the Ministry, whose opinion was sought, also backed Weizsäcker's concerns for the need of a more restrained policy and maintenance of "legal, orderly anti-Jewish measures"⁴⁷⁵:

Erich Albrecht [Deputy of Legal Division] stalled through two more reminders from the *Ostministerium* [Reich Ministry for the Occupied eastern Territories] that their August [1941] inquiry had still not been answered. Then he revealed his suspicions. According to "international common law" (*völkerrechtlichem Gewohnheitsrecht*) foreign citizens in a militarily occupied area still had a claim to a certain minimum of rights, and this included the protection of one's person as well as his property. Measures against persons also carried as much danger of reprisals as those against property.⁴⁷⁶

However, in early November 1941, the Foreign Office's rather distanced and cautious stance against the anti-Jewish policies changed drastically. On October 30, 1941 the Office which had not been consulted on measures in Poland and Russia, for the first time officially was informed by Gestapo Chief, Heinrich Muller about the massacre of Russian Jews with detailed "Activity and Situation Reports" of the *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia. Moreover, at the Wannsee Conference that finally convened on January 20, 1942, Martin Luther, who was the head of *Referat Deutschland*, the Foreign Office division on Jewish Question, fully agreed with Reinhard Heydrich, leader of the *Reich Security Main Office* (RSHA) to close cooperation in putting into practice all measures of the Final Solution in German-dominated Europe. Thus, beginning in the last months of 1941, the outsider position of the Foreign Office was transformed into an active participant in the radical *Judenpolitik* and mass murder of Jews.⁴⁷⁷ However, in contrast to the expansion of German domination in Europe the importance of the Foreign Office itself was

⁴⁷⁵ Browning, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72-81.

diminishing so that the role left to the Office became very limited in the execution of Reich policies. Because of the high number of foreign Jews in the country and the existing special relationship, France was one of the rare exceptions. Jews residing in France were subjects of numerous different countries and the frictionless and efficient way to reach a *Judenfrei* France was to require “Foreign Office competency.”⁴⁷⁸ The seizure of enterprises and properties of those foreign Jews was a particularly delicate subject that necessitated diplomatic skills and tactful handling. Furthermore, the conventional diplomatic conduit through the Foreign Office was the only channel that Germany had in order to influence Turkey’s actions or decisions in solving the question of Turkish Jews in German controlled Europe.

In the year that followed the Turkish request of September 1941, the documents show that there was no change in the German stance vis-à-vis the property of Turkish Jews. They did not indicate any intention to exempt these Jews from the declared economic sanctions or to deal positively with Turkish diplomatic demands for assignment of non-Jewish Turkish administrators to the Turkish Jews’ enterprises in occupied France. The short internment of the three Turkish non-Jewish nationals in Paris, in October 1941 who seemingly were unilaterally assigned to the management of the businesses of Jewish citizens could be seen as a clear sign of the German firmness in their decisiveness not to tolerate any interference in their economic implementations.⁴⁷⁹ In the general scheme of Germany’s gross *Judenpolitik*, which became more

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴⁷⁹ From the Turkish Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 8, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 28, p. 461. These three Turkish nationals were Hüseyin Nakıp, Mehmet Niyazi and Sinan Esat. A communication just two days later reveals that these three Turkish nationals were freed. See from the Turkish Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 10, 1941. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 29, p. 462.

radical with the determination and implementations of the “Final Solution,”⁴⁸⁰ to make concessions specific to the assets of Turkish Jews in France was a minor issue and totally out of consideration. Furthermore, with the entry of the most important neutral country, the U.S., into the war in December 1941, there were fewer reasons for Germany to act cautiously with considerations about possible repercussions that could be triggered with her policies *vis-à-vis* foreign Jews in Europe. Although we do not have the response to the inquiry sent in March 1942 from the Embassy in Vichy to the Consulate-General in Paris asking for information about the recent situation of the appointment of Turkish administrators in the occupied region,⁴⁸¹ the ongoing non-resolving state of the issue in the Vichy France throughout 1942, despite the high traffic in communications between the Turkish Diplomatic delegations and the French authorities suggests that Turkish efforts to protect the properties of their Jewish citizens by assigning Turkish administrators in German occupied France did not produce any concrete results.

5.5.3.2 The Irreconcilable Approach of Vichy France.

Around the first week of September 1941, parallel to an application to the German authorities in occupied France, a separate application was also made to the Vichy government asking authorization for assigning Turkish non-Jewish trustees for properties owned by Turkish Jewish citizens. Actually, on paper, the French establishment in Vichy should have been the addressee for all Aryanization implementations taking place in both parts of France. However, in reality the *de facto* regime had authority only within her zone and all applications submitted by Turkish

⁴⁸⁰ According to historians, the decision for total annihilation of Jews most probably was also made in the last months of 1941. See page 100, note 208, in the previous chapter on possible dates for the German decision of the “Final Solution.”

⁴⁸¹ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Consulate General in Paris, March 6, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 39, p. 468.

diplomats to the French authorities on the matter were limited to Jews living in the southern part of France.

Documents show that in the months following September 1941, both the Turkish Embassy in Vichy and the Turkish Consulate in Marseilles persistently applied numerous times to French authorities and reiterated their request for the appointment of Turkish administrators for Turkish Jewish enterprises.⁴⁸² The addressee of all these applications was either the government bureau of Jewish affairs, i.e., *Comissariat General aux Questions Juives* or the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since the French regarded all Jewish property or enterprises in France as French national possessions, they were attentive not only to any German interference, but also to foreign interest or claim in the sale or liquidation of those possessions. In contrast, Turkish diplomats insisted that enterprises and property of Turkish citizen Jews, even if it were in France, still had to be considered part of Turkish national wealth; thus, if Jewish enterprises and property were sold or liquidated, the collected funds must be transferred to Turkey. According to the diplomats, these estates should be guarded under the administration of Turkish trustees since only they could protect Turkish interests properly.⁴⁸³ In response, French authorities persistently refused all Turkish requests on the basis that the law gave only them, the

⁴⁸² From the Turkish Consulate- General in Marseilles to the *Comissariat General aux Questions Juives*, January 3, 1942, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 33, p. 464. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 22, 1942. Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 115. From the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles to the *Comissaire General aux Questions Juives à Vichy*, January 23, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 37. P. 466. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 4, 1942.

⁴⁸³ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 4, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 9, p. 191.

French, the right to appoint *administrateurs provisoires*, and these administrators could not be of the same nationality as the foreign Jew.⁴⁸⁴

On March 18, 1942, the French, for the first time showed some flexibility by accepting the assignment of Turkish “observers” alongside the provisional French administrators.⁴⁸⁵ This proposal did not receive approval from the Turks on the grounds that without any designated authority, these observers could not have any function; thus, they could not interfere in cases of Turkish Jewish properties sold “for nothing.”⁴⁸⁶ On May 15, 1942, Ambassador Erkin urged the Turkish government to act more decisively. According to him, a definite result was not attainable without a threat of retaliation in kind as some of the neutral countries had already done:

...However, after I presented my last communication, the U.S., Cuba and Paraguay Embassies who wanted to begin the appointment of administrators to their citizens, later putting forward that there was no ethnic discrimination in their countries and the provisions of the residence agreements between [their countries], declared that they would not accept appointment of administrators and any constraints or threats on properties or interests of their subjects. [These countries] stated that [in the case of insistence of appointment of administrators] they would retaliate in kind on French citizens in their countries. ... the Brazilian Embassy who earlier acted like us also joined with this group of countries.

The problem has been going on for a long time without result and in the meantime our Jewish subjects were suffering from it. For this reason, I think now the time has come to act tougher with the French Foreign Ministry.

... As I already explained, this problem cannot be solved if the French insist on their counterproposal of [appointment of] only one administrator. In this situation – *if it fits our general policy on the Jewish question*- it would be appropriate to retaliate in kind on the French people we have [in our country].

⁴⁸⁴ From the *Commissariat General aux Questions Juives*, to the Turkish Consulate General in Marseilles, January 10, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 33, p. 464.

⁴⁸⁵ From the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, March 18, 1942. Referred by Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 116.

⁴⁸⁶ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 40, p. 469.

... According to what was understood from the investigation done- the only secret of the more lenient treatment of Jewish subjects of those countries ... was the definite declaration of these countries to France that they had decided to pursue their demands until the last point.⁴⁸⁷

Erkin's suggestion did not seem to find any proponent in Ankara. The Ministry's disapproving reply to the ambassador can be seen as an important indicator, reflecting the Turkish government's preference of a rather aloof policy on Jewish matters, even if the subject matter was Turkish citizen Jews: "to act reciprocally on French people in our country will not be consistent with our general principles of the Jewish Question."⁴⁸⁸

On July 9, 1942 during his meeting with Pierre Laval, the Prime Minister of the Vichy regime, Ambassador Erkin raised the matter once more.⁴⁸⁹ This initiative also did not bring any change in the following months in French practices *vis-à-vis* French disapproval of appointing Turkish administrators to the enterprises owned by Turkish citizen Jews. Numerous letters of complaint, written by Turkish Jews to the consulates, reflect that the appointed French trustees

⁴⁸⁷ *Ancak, evvelki arizamda takdim eyledigim zamandan sonra Yahudi tebaalarına administrateur tayinine baslamak isteyen Amerika, Kuba, Paraguay Sefaretleri, memleketlerinde irk farki gozetilmedigini ve aradaki ikamet muahedeleri ahkamini ileri surerek Fransa'daki Yahudi tebaalarinin enval ve menafii uzerine herhangi bir kayıt veya tahdid vazini kabul etmiyeceklerini, binaenaleyh administrateur tayinine de razi olmiyacaklarini, aksi takdirde memleketlerindeki Fransiz tebaasi uzerinde mukabele bilmissil yapacaklarini beyanla mukabele eylemislerdir. ... Evvelce bizim sekilde hareket etmekle ise basliyan Brezilya Sefareti de bilahere sozu gecen Sefaret grubuna iltihak eylemistir.*

Mesele hayli zamandır suruklenmekte ve yahudi tebaamız, aralıkta, zarar gormektedir. Bu itibarla Fransiz Hariciyesi nezdinde siki bir tesebbuse gecmek zamanin geldigini zannediyorum.

Fransizlar yalnız bir musahid hususundaki mukabil tekliflerinde ısrar ettikleri takdirde bu surety hallin tatminkar olamdigini yukarıda da arz eyledim. Bu vaziyet karsisinde –eger Yahudi meselesi hakkındaki umumi prensiplerimize muvafik dusuyorsa- bizdeki Fransizlar uzerinde mukabele bilmissil yapilmasi muvafik olacaktır zannındayım.

-Yapılan tahkikattan anlasildigina nazaran- mezkur devlet tebaasından olan Yahudiler, aradaki mesele bir sekli halle raptedilinceye kadar rahat birakilmissa bunun yegane sirri bu Devletlerin son raddeye kadar cezri sekilde yurumeye karar verdiklerini Fransizlara katiyetle ifade etmis bulunmalaridir. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no, 40, p. 469. The translation done and emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁴⁸⁸ From the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy in Vichy, June 10, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 44, p. 474.

⁴⁸⁹ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 9, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 48, p. 477.

continued to manage enterprises of Turkish Jews during these months.⁴⁹⁰ A letter written by Elie Merjan to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy serves as one example:

...In effect, despite my nationality and my regular contacts with my consulate at Marseilles, my shop was given over to an administrator since 27 December 1941. Since that day my money and my merchandise, and even worse my personal villa where I live with my family, have been sealed. I must direct your attention to the fact that yesterday, Tuesday 16 June 1942, my administrator warned me verbally that he had received orders to liquidate my business by selling it before a notary auction, and that he would come today to evaluate my personal home, for what purpose I do not know.⁴⁹¹

Leon Baharliya's case is another example illustrating that Turkish diplomatic intervention was ineffective when it was exercised. In this case, the assignment of Ismail Muhtar unilaterally to Baharliya's enterprise in Nice and the keeping of his account books by Muhtar even created a lethal risk to Baharliya. Communications illustrate that although the Consulate-General in Marseilles was aware of the potential danger,⁴⁹² upon instruction from the Turkish Ambassador,⁴⁹³ he refused to deliver the accounting books of Baharliya to the French administrator. As a consequence, Baharliya was found guilty by a French court. This verdict put this old and unhealthy man at great risk of being sent to a concentration camp.⁴⁹⁴ As stated by

⁴⁹⁰ From Albert D. Salmona to the Turkish Honorary Consul in Lyon, February 26, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 2, p. 184. From H. Sarhan to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, June 10, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 6, p. 189.

⁴⁹¹ From Elie Merjan to the Ambassador of the Turkish Republic, June 17, 1942. Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 114.

⁴⁹² From the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, November 18, 1942. All the documents related with the "Baharliya" case were for the first time introduced by the producers of the film entitled, "*The Turkish Passport*" in a separate web-page, under the caption of "Documents." See <http://www.theturkishpassport.com/documents.asp> (Accessed in October 2011).

⁴⁹³ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles, December 1, 1942. "Since French authorities did not accept the principle of the appointment of Turkish administrators to the Turkish Jews, we cannot accept the delivery of the accounting books to the French administrator who was assigned earlier to him [Baharliya]. – *Fransız alakadar makamları türk yahudilerine türk administrateur tayini prensibini kabul etmediklerine göre Baharliya'nın hesabatının evvelce kendisi için tayin olunan fransız administrateur'e tevdiine muvafakat edemeyiz.*"

⁴⁹⁴ From Ismail Muhtar, to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles, March 10, 1943.

the consul, the verdict was also a dismal warning and challenge to the Consulate-General about his interference.⁴⁹⁵

The change in French policy came at last, after two years of opposition, in December 1942. On December 2, the French Foreign Ministry declared in a note French acceptance of the appointment of Turkish administrators to Turkish enterprises.⁴⁹⁶ However, according to the note, these administrators would receive their directives from CGQJ, had to act according to the associated French law and in no way would have the right to obstruct the sale or liquidation of Jewish enterprises to which they were assigned. Despite all these limitations, a comment by the Consulate General in Marseilles reflects that the new policy was regarded as an opportunity for Jewish citizens of Turkey as it might mean the possibility of controlling their enterprises indirectly through administrators of their own nationality.⁴⁹⁷ In his report on the French decision, Ambassador Erkin, particularly emphasized the French consent to make payments from the funds accumulated with the sale to those Turkish Jews who would like to return to Turkey. However, the Ambassador had some doubts about the future fulfillment of this French promise.⁴⁹⁸

Is there a rational basis for this positive change in the policies in regard to Turkish Jews and their properties? What could be the reason for the acceptance by French authorities of the appointment of the Turkish administrators and even the transfer of funds to Turkey? Was it Turkish diplomatic insistence in France which ultimately brought about this French decision?

⁴⁹⁵ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, March 12, 1943.

⁴⁹⁶ From the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, December 2, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 25, p. 202.

⁴⁹⁷ From the Turkish Consulate General in Marseilles to the Embassy in Vichy, December 12, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 58, p. 487.

⁴⁹⁸ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 31, p. 207.

Could the invasion of Vichy France by the Germans on November 11, 1942, and thus a stronger German influence on the French establishment, have been a factor in the emergence of the new French decision of December 1942?

A wider perspective could give some hints about possible answers to these questions. In fact, in spite of the heavy traffic in communications between the Turkish diplomatic delegation and French authorities, it was ultimately the German plans to create a *Judenfrei* France in the background that dictated both policies in regards to Turkish Jews and to their properties. In early autumn 1942, the neutral countries of Europe, except Turkey, i.e., Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and Sweden had already accepted withdrawing their Jews from German controlled Europe. Furthermore, in the same months of 1942, through the efforts of the Foreign Office, the Germans gained a free hand to include the Jews of Slovakia, Croatia, Rumania, Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary to their list of deportable Jews.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, except for the Italian Jewish community of France, Turkish Jews, with their relatively high population were the only foreign nationality hindering the Germans from the realization of their *Judenpolitik* in France.

5.6 THE GERMAN INITIATIVE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF TURKISH JEWS IN FRANCE

In September 1942, the German Foreign Office which had solved the foreign Jewish problem to a great extent in the fatherland and occupied Western Europe, turned to Turkey to solve the Turkish Jewish question in German occupied France, Holland and Belgium. Ribbentrop

⁴⁹⁹ Browning p. 104.

instructed his diplomatic delegation in Ankara to approach the Turkish government offering it the choice of withdrawing their Jewish subjects from France by January 1, 1943 or agreeing to the inclusion of them as subject to all German measures, including deportation to the East.⁵⁰⁰ According to the Germans, not only the Jews themselves but Jewish property left behind by the Turkish Jews, whether they were recalled or deported, was also an important issue that should not be held in abeyance. Indeed, Germany already had agreements with countries like Slovakia and Bulgaria and was in ongoing negotiations with Romania and Hungary on how to evaluate the properties of their Jews living abroad. For example, in November 1941, Slovak consent to the deportation of Slovak Jews in German territories to the East was obtained only by assuring the Slovak government that “Slovak claims to the Jewish property left behind would be endangered in no way.”⁵⁰¹ Early in the summer of 1942, Germany and Bulgaria also came to a similar understanding on properties of Bulgarian Jews who were to be deported from western occupied territories.⁵⁰² By the same token, a report written by the Turkish Paris vice-consul Namık Kemal Yolga in July 1943, giving brief information about Greek Jews can be seen as a clue to the existence of a similar mutual agreement between Germany and Greece.⁵⁰³ In November 1942, the German Foreign Office had been quite successful in securing the roundup and deportation of Greek Jews in the occupied zone,⁵⁰⁴ and according to Yolga, about 600 enterprises and dwellings

⁵⁰⁰ See section 4.4.6 of previous chapter on this topic.

⁵⁰¹ Browning, p. 96.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁰³ A report written by the Paris Vice Consul Namık Kemal Yolga to the Consul Fikret Şefik Özdoğanlı, July 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 134, p. 289.

⁵⁰⁴ With permission from Berlin, awarded on October 12, 1942, French police with the SS began on November 5, 1942 in to arrest in surprise raids Greek Jews who hereto had been immune from such actions. These Greek Jews were deported to Auschwitz on November 9 and 11, 1942 in convoys no. 30 and 31. Zuccotti, p. 158.

that were left behind them were taken charge of by a commission headed by a former Greek minister and 20 Greek administrators.⁵⁰⁵

In similar fashion, Germany approached Ankara, ready to give special consideration to Turkish demands for properties of their Jews abroad in order to convince Turkish authorities to recall their Jews in the occupied territories or surrender them for deportation. By the same token, as a *bona fides* gesture, the Germans were prepared to accept the Turkish Jewish assets in France as Turkish national wealth and the management of them by Turkish trustees who would be appointed by Turkish diplomats. Indeed, in the second week of October, German ambassador Von Papen was instructed by Berlin to specifically present this option to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁰⁶ Thus, we conclude that it was not what was happening in France, but negotiations that took place in October –November 1942 between Ankara and Berlin that paved the way for the decision to permit the assignment of non-Jewish Turkish nationality administrators to the Turkish properties in France.

⁵⁰⁵ A report written by Paris vice consul Namık Kemal Yolga to Consul-General Fikret Şefik Özdoğancı, July 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 132, p. 287.

⁵⁰⁶ From the German Foreign Office to the German Embassy in Ankara, October 12, 1942. Quoted by Browning, p. 107.

5.7 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASSIGNMENT OF TURKISH ADMINISTRATORS (TRUSTEES)

In December 1942, with French approval, Rüstem Kantemir and Muhtar Katircioğlu were assigned as two administrators in the Vichy part of France.⁵⁰⁷ In the occupied zone, of which the Paris region was the main area where most of the Turkish Jews lived and had businesses and homes, Recep Zerman, an employee in the Paris Consulate General, was selected for this function. Although now there were Turkish administrators, documents reflect that over the next eighteen months of the German occupation, nothing much changed. The appointed administrators and the Turkish diplomatic delegation did not have much power to intervene in the sale or liquidation of Turkish Jewish enterprises.⁵⁰⁸ A communication, which was sent from the Consulate General in Marseilles in December 1943, exactly one year after French approval was received, attests to how these interventions continued to be ineffective in the southern zone throughout the time elapsed:

One can see that the properties of some of our Jewish subjects are up for sale. Although we are attempting to stop these sales [so far] we have not received a positive response to our applications. Actually, this issue which has been in dispute between the Embassy and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a long time appears still not to have been settled with a definite outcome. ...⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 486. From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Consulate General in Marseilles, December 15, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 208.

⁵⁰⁸ From the Turkish Consulate General in Paris to the Embassy in Vichy, August 26, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 494 and 495.

⁵⁰⁹ From Fuad Carım, the Consul General of Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, December 1, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 498.

By the same token, the Paris Consulate- General's lack of any means to prevent the closure of two Turkish Jewish establishments in Paris in August 1943⁵¹⁰ shows that by mid-1943, Turkish administrators were in charge of the management of only some of the Turkish Jewish businesses in the northern zone, and that Turkish diplomats in occupied France did not have much capacity to interfere with the German policies over them. Moreover, the administrators had very limited freedom in accomplishing their task. A warning note from the Commercial Department of the German Military Administration on the occasion of Zerman's assignment to take control of Isaac Kastoriano's shop in Paris is an example, demonstrating that the administrators' sole purpose was supposed to be Aryanization. They could not act in order to benefit the business owners: "The Aryanization is a legally established measure that has to be enforced independently of the Jews' requests and decisions. The administrative authority should be fundamentally independent of them."⁵¹¹

The French and German authorities were not only unresponsive to any Turkish interference with activities concerning Turkish Jewish enterprises, they also avoided giving a definitive reply to the Turkish requests for explanations of how the funds collected from the sale or liquidation of Turkish Jewish enterprises and blocked accounts would be transferred to Turkey.⁵¹² Thus, in sum, as in the previous years, in 1943 Turkish Jewish citizens suffered the same anti-Jewish economic measures that were in place for other French Jews. Similarly, permission for assignment of Turkish trustees to their businesses in December 1942 did not offer much protection to the Turkish Jewish citizens in regard to the sale of their businesses if it was

⁵¹⁰ From the Turkish Consulate General in Paris to the Embassy in Paris, August 8 and 10, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 62 & 63, p. 494-495.

⁵¹¹ From the German Military Commander in France to the Turkish Consulate General in Paris, May 27, 1943. SSC 126.

⁵¹² From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Paris Consulate General, July 15, 1943. SSC doc. no. 126.

their enterprise's turn to be sold.⁵¹³ Indeed, from a communication of April 16, 1943, sent from the Consulate General of Marseilles, we learn that the head of CGQJ in Marseilles had received an order the day before to sell or liquidate Turkish Jewish enterprises and estates whose administrators were non-Jewish Turks.⁵¹⁴

By the spring of 1943, it was clear that the reason making the rescue of Turkish Jews from the concentration camps like Drancy more difficult was the very same reason that eliminated any chance of receiving a more favorable treatment for their properties. During all of 1943, with increasing impatience, the Germans awaited a firm Turkish decision on the two options that were first introduced in Berlin and Ankara in September of the previous year: Turkey should either withdraw her Jews or should officially agree to their deportation to the East. Not only the first deadline of January 1, 1943 but consecutive deadlines that were set as February 28, April 1 and September 1, all came and went without any decision or action taken by the Turks.⁵¹⁵ Turkey's indefinite, somewhat elusive, and time gaining attitude created a considerable annoyance for the German establishment. Indeed, the irritation of German authorities in France can be seen in their responses to even the most simple demands of the Turkish diplomatic delegations in France. The refusal of travel permission requested by the Paris Consul General for a sick Turkish Jewish woman to travel from her hospital to a nearby preventorium as her doctor recommended, is one example among many. In reply, the German

⁵¹³ In general, the pace of Aryanization did not meet the Germans' expectations because of French reluctance to take over Jewish businesses. "The Aryanization process took years, touched only one-third of the Jewish enterprises, and was completed for only 21.5 percent of them." See Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 173.

⁵¹⁴ From the Consulate General in Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, April 16, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 98, p. 268.

⁵¹⁵ Mahrad, p. 22-26. Mahrad gave these dates basing on German documents. A communication from the Turkish Consulate- General in Paris mentions a postponement of a deadline of October 10 to the end of 1943 and informs that Germans were very definite not to accept yet another postponement. From the Paris Consulate General to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, November 22, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 496.

Embassy advised the General Consulate that “they should provide the return of this particular woman to Turkey if they are really interested in her [welfare].”⁵¹⁶ Similarly, with the same anger and disgust, the Germans were far from accepting Turkish diplomatic demands for the granting of any possible exemptions for enterprises of Turkish Jews to anti-Jewish economic measures in spite of recognizing them as part of the Turkish economic wealth in France.

The only area where Turkish diplomatic intervention appeared to have had some success, although limited, was in the removal of seals on the apartments belonging to Turkish Jews in the environs of Paris. As their owners fled to unoccupied France in the first years after the German invasion, they left behind a number of apartments that since deserted were open to confiscation. An investigation of certain documents shows that in four cases⁵¹⁷ the Turkish protests of seizure of these apartments, particularly after July 1943, succeeded in forcing the Germans to unseal them and put them under the supervision of a Turkish administrator. In one case, documents show that the Germans even agreed to bring back the furniture which had been removed.⁵¹⁸ On the other hand, two lists⁵¹⁹ given by the Paris Turkish Consulate to the Commander of German Security attest that 19 apartments belonging to Turkish Jewish citizens were still under seal as late as February 1944.

Interestingly, with Turkey’s acceptance of the German terms on December 27, 1943 and with the beginning of the exodus of Turkish Jews in convoys, the need for Turkish administrators

⁵¹⁶ From the Consulate General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 287.

⁵¹⁷ The Turkish Jewish citizens associated with these four apartments were Vitali Hayim Benbassa (SSC, doc. no. 81), Eleonore Fresco (See Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, pp. 107-111), Yakop Aseo (SSC, doc. no. 4) and Saruta Gabay (SSC, doc. no. 274).

⁵¹⁸ This was the case of Saruta Gabay. From Recep Zerman to the Paris Consulate General, March 6, 1944. SSC, doc. no. KIC 085. Although a similar application was done for Aseo, its result is unknown.

⁵¹⁹ These are attached lists to the two communications from the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the German Commander in the Security Police and Security Service, January 17, 1944 and communication of January 28, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 100 and 233.

surfaced even more strongly. All the shops, stores and apartments that would be left behind were in need of surveillance since in the absence of their owners, their confiscation would be easier. A list in the Stanford Shaw collection in USHMM shows that at the beginning of 1944, the number of Turkish administrators in the Paris region increased dramatically to 10,⁵²⁰ and there were about 50 Jews whose properties were in the custody of these administrators.⁵²¹ Information on how these properties, particularly those whose owners never returned, were handled in the post-war era is another topic worth examining.

⁵²⁰ The name of the Turkish administrators were Hüseyin Nakib, Niyazi Gerede, Ali Topçubaşı, Tevfik Şükrü, Fethi Nevzad, Recep Zerman, Arif Tomruk, Vefik Azer and Sinan Essad. The name of one of the assigned administrator could not be read.

⁵²¹ SSC, doc. no. 101-104.

6.0 “IRREGULAR” TURKISH JEWS IN FRANCE IN 1944: THE AROUSED INTERNATIONAL INTEREST AND THE TURKISH STANCE

The dreadful situation of *irregular* Turkish Jews in France came to the attention of the world only at the end of December 1943. These Turkish Jews had not met the paperwork requirements for maintaining their Turkish citizenship and thus could not benefit from the help and rights that were otherwise extended to nationals of neutral countries in France, including the right to return to their native countries. Moreover, January 1944 was the last date established by the Germans for all Turkish Jews to leave France in order not to face the measures applied to stateless Jews. As described in Chapter 4, a great number of Turkish Jews were trapped in this dire situation. In the present chapter we focus on the international response and Turkish stance vis-à-vis irregular citizens.

6.1 DISSEMINATION OF NEWS ON THE PRECARIOUS SITUATION OF EX-TURKISH JEWISH CITIZENS

In mid-December 1943, the situation of irregular Turkish Jews in France became known to Jewish refugee aid organizations in Lisbon through a report written by their informants in France, which described the precarious state of the ex-Turkish citizens for the first time:

Jews of neutral countries are spared; the Portuguese as well as the Swiss have just been repatriated.

As for the Jews of Turkish nationality, they are living in the constant threat of deportation, since the great majority of them are not recognized as Turkish by their Consulate, some because they have not been in Turkey for many years, others because of failure to renew their nationality grant every year at their Consulate.

I take the liberty of making the following suggestion ...: to get in touch with American authorities and ask them to be good enough to make the suggestion to the Turkish Embassy here that Turkey recognizes its Jewish nationals whose nationality is not entirely in order, if only for the duration of the hostilities. This would be a humanitarian act which would save many Turkish Jews now living in unceasing terror of being deported.⁵²²

It was actually the World Jewish Congress (WJC) Lisbon delegate Isaac Weissman who vigorously publicized the probable disaster awaiting these Turkish Jews in France. On December 13, via telegraph, he informed Chaim Barlas, head of the Jewish Agency Office in Istanbul, about the situation and urged him to take urgent action.

*En France vivent environ dix milles Juifs de nationalité Turque depuis générations mais suite précédents lois nationalité contestée. On veut les considérer apatrides et déporter à Pologne. Prière intervenir urgence auprès du gouvernement Turc priant au nom humanité sauver ces malheureux en leur accordant protection provisoire et instruisant consulats conséquence.*⁵²³

With a separate letter addressed to Barlas, Weissman provided more details:

The fate of our Turkish Jews in France is becoming disastrous indeed.

It was about 1935 when a law promulgated in Ankara cancelled the nationality of thousands of Jews living abroad. They had to make special application in case they

⁵²² Report sent by the HICEM Lisbon office to their headquarters in New York, December 17, 1943. *Archives of the Holocaust – American Jewish Committee, New York*, ed. by Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (New York: Garland Publishing House, 1991), v17, doc. 77, p. 156. HICEM was a refugee organization aiming to help European Jews to emigrate. After Germany's occupation of France in mid-1940, HICEM closed its European headquarters in Paris and moved its offices to Lisbon.

⁵²³ Cable sent by Isaac Weissman to Chaim Barlas, January 13, 1944.. "In France, about ten thousand Jews who have been of Turkish nationality for generations are under disputed nationality laws. They want to consider them as stateless and to deport them to Poland. We kindly ask the urgent intervention of the Turkish government by instructing its consulates accordingly to save these unfortunate people by giving them temporary protection in the name of humanity." Translated by I. I. Bahar.

should like to be recognized as Turkish citizens. All have made the necessary applications. Many of them have been refused; others have never received an answer. All these people are really Turkish born people, most of them from Istanbul, Smyrna, etc. and among them there are many Turkish war veterans.

The French authorities never recognized their denationalization by the Turkish authorities and all the identity and residence papers that were delivered by the French authorities mentioned Turkish nationality. Consequently, the German occupied authorities until now considered them as Turkish citizens and treated them as neutrals with all the sufferings as Jews but without concentration camps and deportation.

Lately, the Germans learned that nearly all of these Jews were no longer considered as Turkish citizens. (Only about 10% of all the Turkish Jews living in France are recognized by the Turkish Consulates in France as Turkish citizens) and they began to put them in concentration camps.

The fate of Jewish people in concentration camps is well known to you, this means deportation and deportation means massacre.⁵²⁴

Weissman concurrently cabled the same information to Chaim Weizmann, President of the Jewish Agency, and to Stephan Wise, President of the WJC, attracting the attention of their delegations in London and Washington.⁵²⁵

6.1.1 Reactions

Weissman's cables created a stir in different centers of the world. In Turkey, Barlas sent a copy with an explanatory note⁵²⁶ to Joseph Levy, the New York Times correspondent in Istanbul⁵²⁷

⁵²⁴ Letter sent by Weissman to Barlas, December 20, 1943. PRO (Public Record Office, Kew –England) FO (Foreign Office) 371, W662 -47. Copies of the same letter were also sent to the Jewish organizations in London and Washington. It is to be assumed that due to war conditions Barlas received this detailed letter a few months later, after his first appeal to Turkish authorities, British Embassy and the U.S. Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt. Thus, in his first efforts he did not use the arguments of this letter.

⁵²⁵ Cable from Weissman to Weizmann, December 20, 1943, Central Zionist Archives- CZA L15\425-29. Cable from Maurice Perlzweig to A.L. Easterman, December 29, 1943. PRO FO W91-91-4.

⁵²⁶ Note-Concernant 10 000 Juifs ex sujet Turc en France, CZA L15\425-35. In contrast to Weissman, Barlas portrayed the ex-Turkish Jewish citizens as Jews of Turkish origin who have been in France for several generations.

⁵²⁷ From Barlas to Joseph Levy, December 15, 1943. CZA L15\425-33.

and to Sami Günzberg, a prominent and influential Turkish Jew.⁵²⁸ Barlas urged them to use their connections to secure a favorable response by the Turkish establishment to the problem. Günzberg, in turn, applied to the Turkish president İsmet İnönü. In a letter of richly elaborated language, he implored İnönü to intervene.⁵²⁹ Barlas also met with the British and American diplomats in Ankara in the first week of January 1944, and discussed with them how to present the matter effectively to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, he made an unofficial appeal to the Turkish Ambassador in France, Şevki Berker, who he believed had sympathetic feelings towards the Jewish question⁵³⁰ “in an attempt to prevent withdrawal of Turkish recognition being actually put into effect for the moment.”⁵³¹

In London, on December 30, A.L. Easterman, the political Secretary of the European Division of the World Jewish Congress, met with G.H. Hall, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and asked for the British government’s help to save the “Jews in France who, by reason of technicality, appear to have lost their Turkish citizenship and are threatened with deportation by the Germans” by convincing Turkey to grant a “provisional recognition” of their Turkish nationality.⁵³² The British Foreign Office “feeling that if anything was to be done, it should be done quickly,”⁵³³ the next day instructed its embassy in Ankara to examine the

⁵²⁸ From Barlas to Sami Günzberg, December 18, 1943. CZA L15\425- 34.

⁵²⁹ From Sami Günzberg to İsmet İnönü, December 20, 1943. Rifat Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyet’in Dişçibaşısı Sami Günzberg* [The Chief Dentist of the Court and Republic –Sami Günzberg], p. 156.

⁵³⁰ From British Ambassador Sir H Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office, January 15, 1944, PRO FO W1407/91/91/48. Berker was Under-Secretary in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs before he was appointed to Paris as ambassador in September 1943. See note 340. During Berker’s career in Ankara, Barlas met with him several times in relation to refugee issues.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² From A.L. Easterman, Political Secretary of WJC European Division to G.H. Hall, Under-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 31, 1943. PRO FO W91/-/48/4.

⁵³³ Minutes of the meeting between Mr. Easterman and Mr. Hall, December 30, 1943. PRO FO W91/91/48/3.

possibility of approaching the Turkish Government either separately or together with the Americans.⁵³⁴

The reactions in Washington were also immediate. Maurice Perlzweig, from the headquarters of the World Jewish Congress, got in touch with Turkish Ambassador Münir Ertegün, and presented the situation to the State Department without delay.⁵³⁵ Similarly, Wise appealed to Laurence Steinhardt, U.S. ambassador in Ankara, with whom he had had a close relationship for many years, and urged him to ask the Turkish government for a suspension of the requirements of the Turkish Citizenship laws that put the ex-Turkish Jews into jeopardy “until France would be liberated.”⁵³⁶ Wise reiterated the same request personally to Turkish Ambassador Ertegün⁵³⁷ and wrote a letter to the State Department:

... May I draw your attention to a statute promulgated in Ankara in 1935 as a result of which a large segment of Turkish Jews residing abroad lost their status as Turkish citizens.

... I therefore feel it imperative to point out that in this life and death matter the power to render aid is vested not with the Vichy authorities but with the Turkish Diplomatic Representatives in France who have the prerogative to recognize them as Turkish citizens.

... It is my opinion that the technical problem of whether these endangered Jews are Turkish citizens or not is immaterial and should be postponed until after the war.⁵³⁸

Interestingly, the situation of ex-Turkish Jews was also recognized in South America where there were Sephardic communities. Both in Buenos Aires and Santiago, ad-hoc

⁵³⁴ From the Foreign Office to Angora(Ankara), January 2, 1944. PRO FO W1407/91/4.

⁵³⁵ From Maurice Perlzweig to Alex Easterman, December 29, 1943. PRO FO W91/91/4.

⁵³⁶ Telegraph from Stephan Wise to U.S. Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt, January 9, 1944. Library of Congress-LC, Steinhardt Papers, Year Box: 1944.

⁵³⁷ From the Turkish Washington Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc , no. 72, p. 504.

⁵³⁸ From Stephan Wise to Howard K. Travers, Chief Visa Division Department of State, January 27, 1944. Arnold Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch* (Lexington, KY: Private Publisher, 2010), p. 267.

committees applied to their Turkish Embassies to ask for the Turkish government's intervention to save these Jews.⁵³⁹

6.1.2 Presentation of the Theme of Rescue of Irregular Jewish Citizens in France in Holocaust Historiography

Did all these demarches that began in the last days of 1943 succeed in convincing the Turkish authorities to take the Turkish Jews under their protection? Were these Jews eventually saved from deportation to death camps?

According to almost all historians and, more importantly, the people involved at the time, Turkey did save these Jews from the German policy of extermination. Stanford Shaw maintained that as a result of Barlas' initiative, Steinhardt succeeded in ensuring the effective intervention of Numan Menemencioglu, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, to save the *irregular citizens*.

... Menemencioglu ... vigorously protested to both the German and Vichy governments, stating that even those Jews who had lost their citizenship because of failure to register under the 1935 law remained in fact 'irregular citizens' of Turkey, entitled to its protection, and thus legally exempt of the anti-Jewish laws, and threatening to withdraw the Turkish ambassador to Paris (Vichy) if they were harmed.⁵⁴⁰ ... By this act, Menemencioglu in essence provided Turkey's protection to those Jews who had lost their Turkish citizenship as well as to those who had retained it, saving them from almost certain death.⁵⁴¹

Christopher Browning, one of the best known Holocaust historians, also made a definitive concurring statement: "Finally, in September 1943, the Turkish government moved to

⁵³⁹ From the Turkish Embassy in Buenos Aires to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 22, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 69, p. 501. Gusttadt states that similar applications were also done in other South American cities such as Montevideo, Caracas and Bogota. Gusttadt, *Die Turkei ...*, p. 386.

⁵⁴⁰ Stanford Shaw did not cite any document that could support his above assertion. We could not identify any document that would verify Shaw's statement about the threat of the Turkish Foreign Minister.

⁵⁴¹ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 125.

rescue its previously abandoned Jews, instructing its consuls to permit the return of all Turkish Jews who so desired.”⁵⁴² Another historian, Henry L. Feingold, pointed out that “early in 1944 he [Steinhardt] was successful in getting the Turkish government to intercede for Jews of Turkish extraction living in France.”⁵⁴³ Rifat Bali, a Turkish historian known as an expert on Turkish Jewish history of this period, also stated in one of his books that “as a result of such contacts [referring therein to the letter sent by Günzberg to President İnönü] these ex-Turkish Jews were rescued from being sent to concentration camps.”⁵⁴⁴ Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, also historians, referred to the Turkish intervention, but with some reservation:

There is some evidence to suggest that in 1942, upon urging of Haim Barlas ... and Laurence Steinhardt ...the Turkish government intervened with the Vichy government to stop the deportations of its “irregular citizens.” ... This episode remains unclear, and requires further research.⁵⁴⁵

The rescue of irregular citizens was also discussed by the British historian Bernard Wasserstein in his book *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. However, unlike other historians, Wasserstein described the Turkish intervention as effective only for *some* Turkish Jews:

In early 1944, a situation arose in France where ten thousand Turkish Jews claimed consular protection from the Turkish government and exemption from the fate of French Jews deported to the east. ... The Turks were prepared to recognize the nationality only of those who had conformed strictly to the law. ... Perhaps as a result [of the pressure of British and American Ambassadors] the Turks did not apply the policy with great rigor. ... Some ‘Turkish’ Jews in France thereby survived...⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴² Christopher Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, p. 156.

⁵⁴³ Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*. (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1970), p. 287.

⁵⁴⁴ Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyet’in Dişçibaşısı Sami Günzberg* [The Chief Dentist of the Court and Republic –Samî Günzberg], p. 157. Bali refers to Shaw for his this specific statement.

⁵⁴⁵ Esther Benbassa & Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry*, p. 180. The writers erroneously present the date as 1942.

⁵⁴⁶ Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*.(London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p. 214.

Wasserstein's reference was an "editorial note" in the 1944 volume of *The Foreign Relations of the United States*. According to the source, only about 700 Jews were rescued:

As a result of representations by the Ambassador in Turkey, by mid-March the Turkish Government had authorized entrance visas to about 700 of the 10,000 Turkish Jews, and, within a few weeks, several hundred repatriates had actually reached Turkey from France. The eventual liberation of France by Allied forces put an end to dangers facing hundreds of Turkish Jews remaining in that country.⁵⁴⁷

6.1.3 Testimonies

The later testimonies of participants in rescue activities also parallel the statements of historians.

Dr. Chaim Pazner, a member of the Jewish Agency Office of Switzerland recounts the events:

In December 1943, Barlas notified me from Istanbul that he had received a cable from Isaac Weissman. ... Weissman requested that Barlas contact the competent Turkish authorities and attempt to save the above mentioned Jews [ex-Turkish citizen Jews]. Upon receiving the telegram, Barlas immediately turned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry in Ankara, submitted a detailed memorandum on the subject, and required urgent action by the Turkish Legation in Paris. ... We later received word from Istanbul and Paris that, with the exception of several score, these ten thousand Jews were saved from extermination.⁵⁴⁸

A book written on another rescue activist, Jacob Griffel, who represented the Orthodox *Agudat Israel* movement in Istanbul during the war years, confirms Pazner's account: "With prodding from Griffel, Steinhardt convinced the Turkish Government to withdraw its decision, and the 10,000 Turkish Jews in France were saved from the clutches of death."⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Editorial note in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1944 vol. 1, p. 986.

⁵⁴⁸ *Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, 8-11 April 1974*. (Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, 1977), p. 649. Quoted by Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 126.

⁵⁴⁹ Joseph Friedenson, *Dateline: Istanbul- Dr. Jacob Griffel's Lone Odyssey through a Sea of Indifference*. (New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1993), p. 68.

Interestingly, in his memoirs, the German Ambassador to Turkey throughout the war years, Franz Von Papen, recounts the same issue and gives the impression that it was his interference that played the most crucial role:

I learned through one of the German émigré professors that the Secretary of the Jewish Agency had asked me to intervene in the matter of the threatened deportations camps in Poland of 10,000 Jews living in Southern France. Most of them were former Turkish citizens of Levantine origin. I promised my help and discussed the matter with Menemencioğlu. There was no legal basis to warrant any official action on his part, but he authorized me to inform Hitler that the deportation of these former Turkish citizens would cause a sensation in Turkey and endanger friendly relations between the two countries. This demarche succeeded in quashing the whole affair.⁵⁵⁰

6.2 A RE-EVALUATION ACCORDING TO DOCUMENTS

In spite of all the views and accounts illustrated above, a careful analysis of all the documents in hand does not actually verify that the Turkish Jews in France were really protected and rescued in early 1944. The portrayal of 10,000 ex-Turkish citizen Jews as exempted from the fate of deportation and extermination with the intervention of the Turkish government needs a careful re-examination.

6.2.1 The Obligation to Withdraw Turkish Jews and Turkish Reluctance

First, as can be seen in the aforementioned documents, the common belief among Jewish leaders and rescue activists was that Britain and the United States should approach the Turkish

⁵⁵⁰ Franz Von Papen, *Memoirs* (London, Andre Deutsch Limited, 1952), p. 522.

authorities to convince them either to grant a provisional recognition of citizenship to these Turkish Jews of irregular status or keep “the case in suspension rather than an unfavorable decision be given.”⁵⁵¹ According to them, if this demarche could be achieved, it might be sufficient to hold off the Germans. However, this way of thinking was too simplistic. Starting from mid-1943, recognition of those 10,000 Jews as Turkish citizens was not enough to save them. They also needed to be repatriated to Turkey.⁵⁵² Neither the international rescue activists nor the British and U.S. Foreign Officers appear to have been aware of the negotiations that had taken place between Turkey and Germany for a year regarding the removal of Turkish Jewish citizens. Again, they did not seem to know that Turkey had reluctantly been obliged to accept the German ultimatum to withdraw its Jewish citizens from German-occupied territories such as France by the end of January 1944, finally after many missed deadlines and increased pressure from the German authorities. According to the agreement drawn up in November 1943,⁵⁵³ the Turkish Jews who would not leave for Turkey would have no protection; they would be treated in the same way as were stateless Jews (like, for example, the German or Polish Jews in France) and would be deported to camps in Poland. Thus, in order to save these 10,000 Jews, Turkey had not only to recognize them as citizens, but also to withdraw them from France.

⁵⁵¹ Letter from H.W. Emerson, Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees-ICR to Howard Bucknell, Jr., the U.S. Embassy, London, February 4, 1944. Public Record Office, Foreign Office PRO FO W1861- 91-48-88. The ICR was founded in 1938 as a result of the Evian Conference. Its mission was to find solutions to the Jewish refugee issues that arose due to the Nazi policies.

⁵⁵² Among the many documents that attest to this fact, for the most straightforward one, see for example, communication from the Consulate-General at Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 132, p. 287. For another example showing the German displeasure with Turkish reluctance and slowness in withdrawing her citizens, see the communication from the Consulate-General at Paris to the Paris Embassy at Vichy, May 17, 1944, The Stanford Shaw Collection -SSC doc. No. 164.

⁵⁵³ A German document underlines the announcement date of the agreement as November 15, 1943. See Communication from German Embassy in Paris to the Turkish Consulate-General, May 11, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 223, p. 359.

Turkish authorities were far from permitting the return of Jewish irregular citizens. Particularly, after the spring of 1943, the Turkish policy was to gain time and avoid as much as possible the return of her Jews, in spite of the increased threats.⁵⁵⁴ Unlike other neutral countries that had mostly completed the withdrawal of their Jews before the end of 1943, Turkey was resisting, creating hindrances in visa applications of Jewish citizens, even when their status was regular. A communication written by Paris Consul- General, Fikret Özdoğanlı on January 16, 1944 clearly reflects the Turkish attitude:

For one year now, there have been continuous demands by German authorities to neutral countries including Turkey to recall their Jews from occupied France. When we communicated this to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were instructed that “The incoming of Jews as masses to the country was not desirable, and visas should not be issued before asking the approval of our central government.” Because of this instruction, while the Jews of all other neutral countries and of Germany’s allies have left France, our citizens could not be sent to Turkey. However, in recent months, the German government gave special emphasis to this matter and informed us that if the Turkish Jews would not leave France by January 31, 1944, they would be subjected to a treatment similar to that of German Jews. [Finally,] as a result of German demarches ... we received, the instruction that “visas could be issued to those Jews whose status were in order if they would like to return to Turkey.”⁵⁵⁵

In the same message, Özdoğanlı also underlines the reluctance of the Turkish government hitherto to accept Turkish Jews even if their status were in order because of concerns on their numbers:

Our government in reality did not want the return of all of our Jewish citizens [these were *regular* citizens; there is no mention of *irregular* or ex-Turkish Jewish citizens, here] to Turkey. Permission to issue visas to them could be obtained for this

⁵⁵⁴ As shown by Guttstadt, beginning in 1943 the denaturalization of irregular Turkish Jewish citizens in France also gained speed. See Chapter 4, p. 114.

⁵⁵⁵ From Paris Consul-General Fikret Özdoğanlı to Turkish Consulate-General at Marseilles, January 16, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 332. Translated by I. I. Bahar. Özdoğanlı here refers to the instruction of the Turkish Foreign Ministry of December 27, 1943. It was with this specific instruction that the obstruction on issuance of visa to *regular* Turkish Jewish citizens was lifted. See communication from Turkish Paris Embassy at Vichy to Turkish Marseilles Consulate-General at Grenoble, December 27, 1944, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 214, p. 347.

time only, after I explained that their total number would not constitute a considerable amount.⁵⁵⁶

The reading of two passages from two different communications back to back also reflects without doubt the Turkish stance. The first is dated July 23, 1943:

Starting from August 1941, within the scope of the operations to arrest and intern Jews, the Turkish citizen Jews have been collectively arrested and sent to various camps. Those Turkish Jews, like the citizens of the other neutral countries, were released from the camps in the spring of 1942. After that, our fellow citizens who were arrested by mistake or for petty reasons continued to be released upon the application of our Consulate-General to the French and German authorities. However, in the last couple of months, the German authorities, aiming at forcing us to enable the return of those Turkish Jews who were arrested and sent to camps under trivial pretexts, began to inform us that Turkish Jews could be released only with the condition of their return to Turkey.⁵⁵⁷

The second was written on January 15, 1944:

Our Jewish citizens who were interned in the German camps and whose release was not permitted by the German authorities unless they were sent back to the country [Turkey] were released two days ago after the Ministry's permission of issuance of visas to *regular* Jews whoever wants to return to the country.⁵⁵⁸

For Turkey, who resisted the German pressure for a long time and avoided accepting even a portion of the 2,000 Jews recognized as *regular* by her consulates, to permit the return of Jews at the level of 10,000 was completely out of the question. Thus, the Turks had no intentions to relax the strictures regarding the provisions of the citizenship law. An instruction sent from Ankara in response to an inquiry from the Paris Consulate-General indeed attests to the persistent

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. Another communication defines this total number as 350. From Paris Consulate-General to Paris Embassy at Vichy, November 11, 1943. Şimsir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 65, p. 496.

⁵⁵⁷ Communication sent from Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to Turkish Embassy at Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimsir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 132, p. 287.

⁵⁵⁸ From the Paris General Consulate to the Marseilles General Consulate, January 15, 1944. Şimsir, *Türk Yahudiler* doc no. 226, p. 362.

and determined Turkish policy: “a visa should not be issued to Jews and their children whose status is *not in order*.”⁵⁵⁹

6.2.2 Misrepresentation of the Matter by the U.S. Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt

Although the Turkish Foreign Ministry was firm in its policy, a communication written by Secretary of State Hull presents U.S. Ambassador Steinhardt’s impressions of his unofficial meeting on January 10, with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Menemencioglu, as somewhat promising.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, a letter of gratitude written by Barlas to Steinhardt reflects the hopeful expectations that had been raised by this meeting:

I am directed by the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine to express to you our heartfelt gratitude for your kind intervention with regard to the Jews - ex-Turkish citizens in France. I was happy to inform the Executive of the Jewish Agency that it was due to your intervention that these unfortunate people, it is hoped, will be saved from deportation to Poland, which would have meant for them inevitable extermination.⁵⁶¹

These expectations were not baseless. Indeed, in a letter sent to Barlas just one day later, Steinhardt’s optimism in creating these hopes is quite noticeable:

As I explained to you yesterday, while the Vichy government has as yet given no commitment to the Turkish Government, there is every evidence that the intervention of the Turkish authorities has caused the Vichy authorities to at least postpone, if not altogether abandon, their apparent intention to exile these unfortunates to almost certain death by turning them over to the Nazi authorities. Should you have any reason to believe in the future that the Vichy authorities may succumb to Nazi pressure, I hope you will call the same to my attention immediately so that I may request the Turkish authorities to renew their protest.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ From Paris Turkish Ambassador to the Paris Consulate-General, February 3, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 163. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁵⁶⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1944, Volume I, p. 986.

⁵⁶¹ From Barlas to Steinhardt, February 8, 1944. LC, Steinhardt Papers, Box Year 1944.

⁵⁶² From Steinhardt to Barlas, February 9, 1944. Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*, p. 125.

Actually, Steinhardt's message was misleading.⁵⁶³ The Vichy government had control of the southern part of France only. Moreover, in the first months of 1944, Vichy authority existed only on paper. Since the occupation of southern France in November 1942, the German authorities had been "turning more and more to direct action in the southern zone" and particularly "after the summer of 1943, they went on their way more resolutely."⁵⁶⁴ In July 1943, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Alois Brunner, an experienced Final Solution administrator, arrived in France as Eichmann's man, and Vichy's role was further downsized:

Brunner's strategy was to ease the French police out of Jewish affairs entirely. ... He took over the direction of the Drancy camp on 2 July. Vichy thereby lost control of the key point in the administrative network of deportation. Thereafter, the French police and bureaucracy were excluded from any influence on the composition of convoys to the east.⁵⁶⁵

Indeed, most of the Turkish documents of the period clearly show that it was generally the German authorities who were being contacted, not the Vichy government, on applications concerning Jewish matters.

With a report written on February 20, 1944, Steinhardt reiterated his optimistic views, based on his second meeting with the Turkish Foreign Minister on January 18. He quoted the Minister's assurance that "on humanitarian grounds the Turkish government would exert itself to the utmost to afford protection in these cases."⁵⁶⁶ Moreover, he erroneously referred to a party of 52 Turkish Jewish citizens, who came from France to Istanbul about February 16th, as Jews who

⁵⁶³ The Turkish documents in our hand do not present any appeal to the Vichy Government for more favorable treatment to Turkish Jews who were not considered as citizens.

⁵⁶⁴ Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, p. 329.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

⁵⁶⁶ Steinhardt's report to the State Department, February 20, 1944. LC, Steinhardt Papers, Box Year 1944, p. 9.

had lost Turkish nationality.⁵⁶⁷ Significantly, Steinhardt's attitude relieved most of the concerns, even those of the skeptics in the American Administration and Jewish circles.⁵⁶⁸ Barlas attached Steinhardt's letter to the letter he sent to Weismann, the Lisbon representative of the WJC, and informed him that the intervention of the Ambassador "with the Turkish authorities was very successful and it is to be hoped that these unfortunate people will be saved from a fatal disaster."⁵⁶⁹

During this same time, a communication sent by British Ambassador Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to the British Foreign Office, paints a completely different picture. Based on a meeting with Feridun Cemal Erkin, the Assistant Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, on February 21, the British Ambassador portrayed the Turkish policy as having no intention to extend protection to Turkish Jews who had previously been citizens. The Turkish viewpoint was not different from what was conveyed to the Paris Consulate-General about three weeks previously:

It was perhaps severe, but the Turkish Government was very strict on nationality questions and considered that people who did not think it worthwhile to maintain their Turkish connection in good times were not worth protecting merely when trouble arose. ... Turkish Jews who under the decree [those who ceased their

⁵⁶⁷ A report of May 31, 1944 lists the eight convoys organized by the Paris Consulate-General for *regular* Turkish Jewish citizens. The party mentioned by Steinhardt was the second one of 52 Jews. No convoys were organized for *irregulars*. See communication from the Paris Consulate-General to the Paris Embassy, May 31, 1944, SSC doc. no. 176. Ira Hirschmann, the representative of the War Refugee Board-WRB in Turkey was similarly confused. In his report of March 6, 1944, he presented the 700 regular Turkish Jewish citizens who received entrance visas erroneously as part of "10,000 Jews in France who were allegedly divested of their Turkish nationality by operation of Turkish law." See Report from Hirschmann to John G. Pehle, March 6, 1944. *America and the Holocaust*, ed. by David S. Wyman. (New York: Garland Publishing House, 1989) v7, p. 101. Hirschmann's figure of 700 is the source of the editorial note in FRUS 1944 vol. 1, p.986 and consequently used by Wasserstein in his book. See note 24 and 25.

⁵⁶⁸ A communication from Ira Hirschmann who came to Ankara in February 1944 as the special representative of the newly founded WRB reflects this impression: "Although the Turks express themselves as sympathetic, thus far they have been helpful only to a limited extent. In dealing with the Turks, I shall rely entirely on Ambassador Steinhardt who enjoys their full confidence." From Hirschmann to John Pehle, the Director of the Refugee Board, February 18, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 269.

⁵⁶⁹ From Barlas to Weismann, March 8, 1944. CZA 15\425-19.

relations with Turkish Consulates for a period of five years] were not entitled to Turkish protection and from whom it had been withdrawn. The Turkish Government regretted that they could not see their way, even in practice, to modify the provisions of the decree in this respect.⁵⁷⁰

Similarly, an identical memorandum sent to embassies in Washington, London and Buenos Aires on March 4, 1944 from Ankara also illustrated the firm position of the Turkish Government:

In accordance with the 10th provision of our Citizenship Legislation, it is not possible to issue citizenship certificates to the ex-Turkish Jews in France who were deprived of our nationality. Their return to Turkey is also banned according to the 12th provision of the mentioned legislation.⁵⁷¹

In late February 1944, dismal news arrived about the Jews of Turkish nationality residing in Belgium.

Jews of Turkish nationality residing in Belgium, who hitherto had been exempted from the anti-Jewish measures taken by the occupation authorities, have now been arrested and sent to the notorious concentration and clearing camp in Malines according to the information received in Belgian circles here.⁵⁷²

Like those in the occupied France, the Turkish Jews in Belgium were under the jurisdiction of the Consulate-General in Paris. A cable sent in early April from the British Embassy in Ankara to the British Jewish Appeal asking for their intervention, once more reflects the rigid and consistent Turkish policy:

⁵⁷⁰ From Angora to Foreign Office, February 22, 1944. PRO FO W3575, 91-48-100. Günzberg, a prominent member of the Turkish Jewish community, presented Erkin in 1948 as a pro-Arab bureaucrat and maintained that Erkin usually approached the Jewish Question in an inimical way. From Günzberg to Dr. Schwarzbart, World Jewish Congress, New York, June 8, 1948. Bali, *Sarayın ve Cumhuriyet'in Dışçibaşısı Sami Günzberg*, p. 181. A note written by British Ambassador Knatchbull-Hugessen to U.S. Ambassador Steinhardt also portrayed Erkin as a dubious diplomat with connections to pro-Germans. Steinhardt rejected the British suspicions as baseless.

⁵⁷¹ From the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the embassies in Washington, London and Buenos Aires, March 4, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 69-a, p. 502.

⁵⁷² Jewish Telegraphic Agency, February 25, 1944. Quoted in the letter of A.G. Brotman, the secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews to A.W.G. Randall Foreign Ministry, March 3, 1944. PRO FO W3482-3. See also; from Baron Beyeur, Belgian Ambassador in London to A.W.G. Randall, March 15, 1944. PRO FO W4194-18 and from Brotman to A.A. Walker, Foreign Office, March 20, 1944. PRO FO W4482-14.

Competent officials [Turkish] explained that the questions affecting Turkish Jews in Belgium were handled from Paris and that the position was the same as that of Jews in France. ... If the Turkish nationality of such Jews was recognized, they were entitled to and received full Consular protection; *otherwise Turkish authorities did nothing for them.*⁵⁷³

Another British communication also shows what happened if, by chance, any ex-Turkish nationals in France succeeded in reaching the Turkish frontiers by their own means. In line with the Law of Citizenship, their entry to the country was forbidden. The solution was a transit passage:

... Two of these Jews [from France], who had lost their Turkish nationality; recently reached Adrianople [Edirne] on temporary papers, but without Turkish visas. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked to grant Palestinian entry visas, and ... P.C.O. [Palestinian Consular Office] Istanbul is doing so.⁵⁷⁴

The British documents attest that Steinhardt had been informed about the British contacts. Thus, he was fully aware of the comments of Erkin, the policy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the British conclusion that the matter was primarily one of Turkish domestic politics.⁵⁷⁵ However, available documents do not give any hint about a change in his approach. On the contrary, Steinhardt insinuated that his close personal relationship with the Turkish Foreign Minister was instrumental in bringing about changes in the Turkish attitude towards Turkish Jews in France. Furthermore, a letter written by Barlas to Weismann reveals that the Ambassador did not even mention to Barlas, with whom he was constantly in touch, the British reservations. Barlas' peace of mind is evident in this specific letter written about two months after the British comments:

⁵⁷³ From Angora (Ankara) to Foreign Office, April 2, 1944. PRO FO W5170 91/48/110. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁵⁷⁴ From Angora to Foreign Office, April 6, 1944. PRO FO W5836 91/48/161.

⁵⁷⁵ From E.A. Walker, Foreign Office to A.G. Brotman, Esq., The Board of Deputies of British Jews, March 28, 1944. PRO FO W4482/3482/48.

Since no alarming news reached us on this subject, it is reasonable to believe that the matter has been settled at least for the time being. I should be glad to know if you happen to know something more about the fate of these refugees and inform me by cable.⁵⁷⁶

Clearly, the American Ambassador was creating an image that it was through his personal connection to the Turkish Administration that the ex-Turkish Jews in France were being rescued from deportation.

Why was Ambassador Steinhardt promoting such an image? What could be the motivating factors behind his insistence on showing that he was successfully helping to rescue the Turkish Jews in France? Here, let's open a parenthesis so as to better understand this interesting "New Deal" diplomat. A look at his biography, particularly at his earlier career in Moscow and the press campaign against him in autumn 1943, could give us some insights into the probable reasons behind his behavior in the first half of 1944.

6.2.3 Laurence A. Steinhardt: A Jewish American Ambassador in Ankara

Born in 1892, in New York, Steinhardt was a descendant of a German Jewish family who immigrated to the U.S. in 1848. In 1915, Steinhardt graduated from Columbia University Law School and for years worked in his uncle's well-known law firm as a successful young lawyer. With the death of his industrialist father in 1914, Steinhardt inherited a considerable estate at a young age, which he was to enlarge wisely in spite of the adverse conditions of the Great Depression. In 1923, three years after the death of his mother with whom he had a close relationship, Steinhardt married the only daughter of a retired Episcopalian New York banker.

⁵⁷⁶ From Barlas to Weismann, April 20, 1944. CZA L15\425-18.

It is plausible to assume that, raised in a wealthy German-Jewish community in New York, Steinhardt would have been influenced by the typical values and fears of his social milieu starting from a young age. For example, in those years, there was widespread anxiety among the elites of the community that large-scale Eastern European Jewish immigration might eventually lead to increased anti-Semitism. Zionism was yet another unpopular and thorny subject, raising the sensitive “double loyalty” issue in the same circles. With its nationalist ideology, Zionism was indeed seen as a threat to Jewish integration in America. Nevertheless, Steinhardt as a young lawyer presumably had some Jewish consciousness. He joined the Zionist organizations for a brief period, probably seeing the movement “as a way of helping oppressed Jews rather than as an ideology”⁵⁷⁷ like many others.

In 1932, as one of the wealthy members of the “Before Chicago Club,” Steinhardt supported Roosevelt in his successful campaign for the presidency. As is common in American politics, “the spoils belong to the victors.”⁵⁷⁸ Like other members of the “Club,” Steinhardt received an offer and was appointed the U.S. Minister and Envoy Extraordinary to Sweden. After two years of service in Sweden, Steinhardt continued his diplomatic career in Peru and in 1939 was appointed the U.S. ambassador to Moscow.

Steinhardt’s service in Russia between August 1939 and November 1941 constituted the first two tense years of the war during which earthshaking events followed one another at an increasing pace. As soon as he arrived in Moscow, he witnessed the dramatic Nazi-Soviet pact that became the trigger for a war which would soon cover the whole of Europe. Near the

⁵⁷⁷ Barry Rubin, “Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt: The Perils of a Jewish Diplomat, 1940-1945” in *American Jewish History*, 1981, 70, p.331.

⁵⁷⁸ Ralph Stackman, “Laurence A. Steinhardt: New Deal Diplomat” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971), p.1.

completion of his service in November 1941, Soviet Russia, invaded by the German army in June 1941 was in a desperate situation.

During these two years, the refugee issue was one of the hot issues with which the Ambassador had to deal. As a result of the German occupation in Poland, there was a considerable influx of Jewish refugees into Russia. The visa demands of these displaced people and the applications of American Jewish organizations on their behalf with “thousands of letters ... inquiries about visas, whereabouts, welfare, immigration, and relief”⁵⁷⁹ inundated the embassy and created pressure on the staff.

In response, Steinhardt objected to any relaxation in visa procedures and blocked the efforts of those who wanted to be helpful to these people in reaching asylum in America. In his telegram dispatched in October 1940, Steinhardt pressed for tighter American restrictions on refugee entry and claimed that America’s interest lay in not admitting such people who had no special credentials or who could be “professional political agitators.” Steinhardt accused, in particular, the pro-refugee organizations:

[They] are obviously more interested in finding a haven for these unfortunates than they are in safe-guarding the welfare of the United States at the most critical period of its history. I still regard admission to the United States as a privilege, not a right.⁵⁸⁰

Steinhardt’s negative attitude and highly legalistic reasoning against the issuance of visas demanded by pro-refugee organizations supplied the ammunition for the State Department’s restrictive visa policy. In particular, Steinhardt’s views, coming from a Jewish and “New Deal” ambassador, had special significance. Breckinridge Long, the main architect of the Department’s

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 260.
⁵⁸⁰ Rubin, p. 334.

tight immigration policies, used these views effectively in his contacts with Roosevelt as a proof of the rightfulness of his restrictive regulations. In his Memoir, it is possible to see in detail how

Long appreciated Steinhardt's views:

Steinhardt is an able man and has decisiveness and courage. He took a definite stand on the immigration and refugee question and opposed the immigration in large numbers from Russia and Poland of the Eastern Europeans whom he characterizes as entirely unfit to become citizens of this country. He says they are lawless, scheming, defiant-and in many ways inassimilable. He said the general type of intending immigrant was just the same as the criminal Jews who crowd our police court dockets in New York and with whom he is acquainted and whom he feels are never to become moderately decent American citizens.⁵⁸¹

It seems, in a crucial time when the German atrocities were ascending in all the occupied territories, Steinhardt, sitting in a critical position, declined to take any favorable approach towards his Eastern European co-religionists. Actually, his attitude was concurrent with the characteristic "anti-Semitism" and "double loyalty accusation" phobias of America's German Jewish Community where he grew up. Probably, more than any other diplomat in the State Department, the Jewish ambassador was keen on showing that not his religious heritage, but the welfare and best interest of the state were the determining factors in his decisions.

In October 1943, an unexpected event created a big embarrassment for the ambassador. An article published in the *New York Journal PM*,⁵⁸² based on leaked government documents, accused Steinhardt of being one of the adamant executives of the State Department's non-humanitarian refugee policy and portrayed him as both "heartless and anti-Semitic."⁵⁸³ Written by Isadore F. Stone, the article exposed Steinhardt's restrictionist attitude on the refugee issue by referring to several of his dispatches of October 1940 from Moscow. In these messages,

⁵⁸¹ Fred L. Israel, *The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, Selections from the Years 1939-1944* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 225. This specific entry carries the date of November 28, 1941.

⁵⁸² *New York PM*, October 3, 1943.

⁵⁸³ Stackman, p. 265.

Steinhardt had clearly gone farther than other State Department officials of the time in hostility toward refugee advocates. The article received wide attention and triggered a set of new articles in the Jewish press.

The press campaign, with its accusations, was a destructive blow to Steinhardt. To have Jewish support and positive public opinion was crucial for the ambitious ambassador who was planning to enter politics from New York in the near future. To counter the negative campaign, Steinhardt asked for the help of Barlas who, as the head of the Office of Jewish Agency in Istanbul, had good connections in New York. In his letter to Barlas, the ambassador defended himself by stating that there had “been some misunderstanding in certain quarters in the United States on this point,”⁵⁸⁴ and urged him to write a letter to relevant centers so as to inform them about his ongoing efforts in favor of the Jewish refugees. According to Steinhardt’s assertion, his interventions had been of “an informal nature” and with the exception of the high Turkish officials and a few informed representatives of various Jewish agencies, no one else was “aware of the strenuous and persistent unofficial efforts” that he had made “to aid, not only Jewish refugees but, a lot of the minorities under the tax on fortunes.”⁵⁸⁵

In accordance with the Ambassador’s desire, Barlas wrote a letter to the American Jewish Congress, praising Steinhardt’s contribution and cooperation in solving matters on Jewish refugees in Turkey.⁵⁸⁶ Apparently, the letter sent by Barlas and the Ambassador’s own efforts did not create the immediate impact Steinhardt was looking for. Indeed, a letter sent from New York to Steinhardt in June 1944, written by Ira Hirschmann, the representative of the War Refugee Board in Turkey, alluded to the “deep core” of antagonistic feelings still existing against

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 352.

⁵⁸⁵ From Steinhardt to Barlas, December 22, 1943. Quoted by Stackman, p. 352.

⁵⁸⁶ From Barlas to Dr. Nahum Goldman, American Zionist Organization, December 18, 1943. CZA L15-2.

Steinhardt in the Jewish community.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, in the first months of 1944, Steinhardt had a pretty tarnished image within American Jewish circles. It might not be wrong to assume that just before the situation of Turkish Jews in France was publicized, the troubled, only Jewish diplomat within the State Department who was planning to run in the New York governorship race was yearning for an occasion that could help him gain the appreciation of his co-religionists back in his country.⁵⁸⁸

6.2.4 Back to the Situation of Turkish Jews in France

The lack of Turkish intentions to amend the Citizenship Law or relax the application of its provisions was once more firmly confirmed in mid April 1944, this time by Turkish Ambassador Erteğün in Washington.⁵⁸⁹ Erteğün's explanation was not consistent with what Steinhardt described and alarmed American Jewish leaders:

I inform by this letter that the attitude of the Turkish Government with regard to the 10,000 Jews of Turkish origin now in France has not actually changed and that the danger that threatens them is more acute than ever.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ From Hirschman to Steinhardt, June 10, 1944. LC, Steinhardt Papers, Box 44.

⁵⁸⁸ At this time, the balance in the U.S. administration and State Department changed dramatically in favor of a more active involvement in saving the Jews surviving in the German-occupied territories. The report that described the State Department's misconduct of rescue operations was submitted to the President Roosevelt by the Secretary of Treasury Henry J. Morgenthau on January 10. Subsequently, on January 22, 1944 the War Refugee Board was founded with the task of rescuing the victims of oppression. All these developments ended the hegemony of Breckinridge Long in the Department. See Feingold, p. 242-244.

⁵⁸⁹ From Turkish Ambassador, Münir Erteğün to Stephan Wise, April 12, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 273.

⁵⁹⁰ Letter from Leon Kubowitzki, World Jewish Congress to John Pehle, Director of WRB, April 27, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 278.

Moreover, new messages arriving from Lisbon to the State Department via the War Refugee Board (WRB) described the situation of the Turkish nationals in France still as “precarious.”⁵⁹¹

Upon the Turkish Ambassador’s declaration of the Turkish policy, Steinhardt discussed the matter once more with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Menemencioglu. Again, Steinhardt’s report contained somewhat soothing tones. According to the Ambassador, “specific instructions have been sent to the Turkish Ambassador at Vichy”⁵⁹² and there was “every reason to believe these instructions are being faithfully carried out.”⁵⁹³ However, a new explanation by Ertegun in May once more denied any intention to make changes in the Turkish policies:

I had brought this matter to the attention of my Government. I have been recently informed by them that, of the Jews in question, those whose nationality status is in order have been and are being freely admitted to Turkey, and that those who had lost their citizenship could not legally return to Turkey.⁵⁹⁴

Finally, in the first week of May 1944, Barlas, who was certain that the matter had been resolved with the intervention of Steinhardt, received the news about the actual situation in France. To his disappointment, after almost five months, there had been no change in the situation, and the deportation of the Turkish Jews was still going on whenever they were interned. Alarmed, Barlas applied to the Ambassador:

I regret to refer again to the question of the ex-Turkish Jews in France for whom you have successfully intervened and achieved to induce the Turkish Government to extend to them certain measures of protection.

⁵⁹¹ Message from Joseph Schwarz War Refugee Board (WRB) representative in Lisbon, to the State Department, April 25, 1944, and message from Schwarz to Moses A. Leavitt, Secretary of American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, April 25, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, pp. 275, 276.

⁵⁹² WRB Report on developments during the week of May 1-6, 1944. *America and the Holocaust*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), v.11, p. 122.

⁵⁹³ Note from the WRB to the State Department, April 29, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 279.

⁵⁹⁴ From Turkish Ambassador Münir Ertegun to John Pehle, the executive director of the WRB, May 6, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 282.

.....
Unfortunately, I have to inform you that according to information received from reliable sources, in many cases Jews of ex-Turkish citizenship who lived in France were deported to Poland ...⁵⁹⁵

In his letter, Barlas attached two lists of names of Turkish Jewish deportees, and advised the Ambassador to again take up the matter with the Turkish Foreign Minister⁵⁹⁶

Barlas' letter was unpleasant to Steinhardt. His prestigious image of being the key-person in the matter was at stake. In his response to Barlas, Steinhardt reported that he would meet once more with the Turkish Foreign Minister and would urge him to give instructions to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy. In contrast to all his earlier statements, in this specific letter, the Ambassador strongly acknowledged for the first time the difficulty in determining the veracity of the claims of citizenship. He maintained that "Jews who could show some evidence of their Turkish origin" were being saved but there were limits to this kind of treatment:

... while the Turkish Ambassador has been able to intervene effectively on behalf of Jews in France *who were able to establish at least some claim to Turkish citizenship* that there are definite limits to what he may be able to accomplish on behalf of Jews residing in France who have no claim to Turkish citizenship other than that their families perhaps generation ago were of Turkish origin.⁵⁹⁷

As attested to by the various aforementioned statements of the Assistant Secretary General of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Turkish Ambassador in Washington, similar to the earlier war years, Turkish policies remained unchanged in 1944 as well and Turkey did not show any inclination to protect Jews of Turkish origin whose citizenship status was not in order. Given these statements, it is difficult to interpret Ambassador's Steinhardt's statement that the Turkish delegation in France extended their support to those Jews *who were able to establish at*

⁵⁹⁵ Letter from Barlas to Steinhardt, May 6, 1944. CZA\L15-2.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ From Steinhardt to Barlas, May 8, 1944. CZA\L15-2. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

least some claim to Turkish citizenship. Contrary to Steinhardt's allusions, there was not any Turkish communication that reflected the slightest hint of a change in Turkish policy against *irregulars*. All the Turkish documents confirm over and over that the Turkish actions were limited to those Jews whose status was described as regular citizens. Even among them, there were some subgroups whose return to Turkey was prohibited.⁵⁹⁸ Thus, only a limited number of Turkish Jews had a chance to get a visa and return to Turkey with one of the organized convoys. Moreover, contrary to protection, as a letter written for Moris Gabay (born in Izmir, September 1910) shows, the irregulars could in fact be thrown into jeopardy by reporting their status to Nazi authorities:

Monsieur le Chef
De le Section 8
Commissariat Général
Aux Questions Juives
Paris

Monsieur,

En réponse à votre lettre du 18 Février référence 38.106 HB/DB, j'ai l'avantage de vous informer que Monsieur MORIS GABAY n'est pas ressortissant turc en règle. Néanmoins, sa mère, Madame SARUTA GABAY est citoyenne turque titulaire du certificate de nationalité no. 1268 TP.

Paris, le 15 Mars 1944
Le Consul General⁵⁹⁹

In light of the determined Turkish policies, Steinhardt's idea that he would ask the Turkish administration to define the Jews of Turkish origin who should be protected as those

⁵⁹⁸ "The Report of Inter-ministerial Committee on Turkish Citizen Jews in German Occupied Countries." December 16, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc no. 67, p. 499.

⁵⁹⁹ "As a reply to your letter of February 18, of reference 38.106 HB/DB I have the possibility to inform you that Mr. Moris Gabay is not a regular Turkish citizen. Nevertheless, his mother Saruta Gabay is a regular citizen with nationality certificate of no. 1268 TP." From Paris Consul-General to *Comissariat General* of Jewish Question-Paris, March 15, 1944. SSC, no. 280. For a similar type of document see communication from the Consulate-General at Paris to Paris Embassy at Vichy, May 16, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 289, p. 399.

who claimed that “at least one of the parents had any connection with Turkey”⁶⁰⁰ remained hypothetical. Similarly, the instructions he received from the State Department asking him to request that the Turkish government grant temporary protection to those who claimed Turkish nationality led nowhere.⁶⁰¹ Finally, a telegram dispatched by Steinhardt just a few days later marks the final point. According to the Ambassador, there was not much that could be done for the 10,000 Jews who *claimed to be of Turkish origin*:

I was informed by the Minister that on several occasions the Ambassador in Vichy had received specific instructions to do everything within his power to be of help in these cases and that it was indicated from the *very considerable number of Jews claiming Turkish nationality* who have already arrived in Turkey that the efforts had been partially successful at least. It was stated by the minister the Ambassador’s petition in dealing with the authorities in Vichy was “none the advantageous” in that *over 90% of the Jews in France who claim Turk nationality “have not the remotest claim thereto, since in many instances their ancestors have left Turkey several generations ago.”*⁶⁰²

Nevertheless, a Turkish document gives the actual picture and corrects the rather distorted explanations of the Minister. According to the table attached to the report of May 31, 1944, under the auspices of the Paris Consulate, starting with the first convoy of February 8th until May 23rd a total of 414 Turkish Jews returned to Turkey in eight convoys.⁶⁰³ All of them were regular citizens. Thus, the “considerable number” mentioned in the Ambassador’s quotation was altogether 414 and the “Jews claiming Turkish nationality” were actually *regular citizens*. Furthermore, the Minister’s assertion that more than 9,000 of the 10,000 Turkish Jews had not much to claim since they were the grandchildren of Ottoman Jews who left the country

⁶⁰⁰ Minutes of Conversation between Steinhardt and Barlas, May 11, 1944. CZA L15-2.

⁶⁰¹ From Secretary State to American Embassy, Ankara, May 13, 1944, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 283. See also, WRB Report on Developments during the week of May 15-20, 1944. *America and the Holocaust*, p. 150.

⁶⁰² From Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, May 18, 1944. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, p. 285. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁶⁰³ From Consulate-General in Paris to Paris Embassy, May 31, 1944. SSC, doc no. 176.

several generations ago, has not much standing. As will be shown below, even a quick search of the birthplace and dates of the victims deported from France reveals quite a different reality.

The Ambassador's telegram of May 18 also became the substance of the related paragraph of the WRB report for the week of May 15-25, 1944. Steinhardt's explanations were the last time there was a mention of the Turkish Jews in France in a WRB report. After May 1944, the situation of these Jews did not continue to be a subject worth considering either in the weekly reports of the WRB, or in the communications of the U.S. and British embassies. The Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, which holds all the correspondence and notes of Chaim Barlas, does not contain any document that mentions the Turkish Jews in France after this date. The only exception is a letter written by A. Leon Kubowitzki from the World Jewish Congress that carries the date of July 5, 1944. Ironically, the letter asked two simple questions that hitherto had never been answered:

.....
Have you recent information concerning number of Jews of Turkish origin in France who have returned to Turkey, numbers and present conditions those who are still in France? ...⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁴ From A. Leon Kubowitzki, Head Rescue Department, World Jewish Congress to John Pehle, WRB, July 5, 1944. With the request of the WRB, the same letter was sent by the State Department to I. Weismann, Lisbon with a request of reply. Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, pp. 286, 287.

6.3 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TURKISH JEWS IN FRANCE

6.3.1 The number of Turkish Jews in France

In the publications we analyzed above, it is possible to see quite different figures with regard to the numbers of Turkish Jews in France during the war years. For example, according to Emir Kıvrıkcık, the number of Turkish Jews who were rescued by Ambassador Erkin alone from deportations was about 20,000.⁶⁰⁵ On the other hand, Shaw presents the total number of Turkish Jews in France at the beginning of World War II as about 10,000, with the exclusion of the Turkish Jews “who had taken up French citizenship and were no longer carried on the roles of the Turkish consulates.”⁶⁰⁶ However, in another place he mentions “10,000 of Jewish Turks living in Southern France whose Turkish citizenship lapsed because of failure to register”⁶⁰⁷ which creates an ambiguity as if the total number was 20,000. Indeed, on some webpages that refer to Shaw, the number of Turkish Jews rescued from France is shown as 20,000.⁶⁰⁸ Arnold Reisman also adopted the figure of 20,000 and used it as the basis for his claim that, percentage-wise, fewer Turkish Jews were taken to death camps compared to French Jews. In contrast, Bilal Şimşir rejects the statement that 20,000 Turkish Jews benefited from the consular protection. According to Şimşir, this number should not be more than 2,000.⁶⁰⁹

Official sources point to a figure very close to that of Şimşir, particularly as of 1940. Consular reports from Paris and Marseilles acknowledge that, as of spring 1943, there were only

⁶⁰⁵ See Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.

⁶⁰⁶ Shaw, *Turkey & Holocaust*, p. 46.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁶⁰⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Turkey (Accessed in January 2012).

⁶⁰⁹ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 18.

about 1,500 Turkish Jews who were recognized as *regular* Turkish citizens by these consulates. A list submitted by the Turkish Consul- General in Paris to the German authorities in early February 1943 reported the number of “Jews whose return the Turkish government valued” as only 631.⁶¹⁰ This figure of Jews living in the occupied region was as low as 550 according to a communication sent from the same consulate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara.⁶¹¹ Similarly, according to a communication from the Marseilles Consulate-General, in the early spring of 1943, this number was 848 in Southern France.⁶¹² In the light of these consular documents, the approximate number of 3,500 given by Turkish Foreign Minister Menemenciöglü in his memo⁶¹³ of October 1942 for the *regulars* does not seem to reflect the exact figure. In fact, these later consulate figures were given in response to a questionnaire sent by the Ministry, dated January 14, 1943.⁶¹⁴

On the other hand, with regard to the *irregular* Turkish Jews, almost all documents consistently point to a number of about 10,000, except for a WRB report introduced relatively late (in the third week of April 1944) which reports that the number of these ex-Turkish citizen Jews was 6,000.⁶¹⁵ Thus, in the light of the information provided in these numerous documents,

⁶¹⁰ Browning, p. 155.

⁶¹¹ From the Turkish Consulate- General in Paris to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, p. 18.

⁶¹² From Marseille Consulate-General to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 96, p. 267. See also, from Paris Consulate-General to the Paris Embassy at Vichy, May 31, 1944. SSC doc. no. 172.

⁶¹³ Communication written by the Turkish Foreign Minister Numan Menemenciöglü to the Prime Minister, October 21, 1942. BCA- Turkish Prime Ministry Archives no.: 030.10.232.564.20.

⁶¹⁴ Here, it is worth considering that during 1940's mass denaturalization, an important number of Turkish Jews in France lost their citizenship. See section 4.3.3.1 in Chapter 4. See also Corinna Görgü Guttstadt, “Depriving non-Muslims of citizenship as part of the Turkification policy in the early years of the Turkish Republic: The case of Turkish Jews and its consequences during the Holocaust,” in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities*. (London: GBR: I.B. Tauris & Company, 2006), p. 53-57.

⁶¹⁵ WRB Report on developments during the week of April 24-29, 1944. *America and the Holocaust*, v. 11. p. 111. The Board's figure was based on information they received from Joint Distribution Committee–JDC. In all other WRB reports this figure was 10,000.

it is safe to conclude that the total number of Turkish Jews in France (*regular* and *irregular*) was at most 12.000. On this point, Şimşir's assertion that the number of irregulars should be at most 100 is completely baseless. Among the many documents, it suffices to check, for example, the report written by Turkish Foreign Minister, Menemencioğlu to President İnönü.⁶¹⁶ Şimşir described these 10,000 Jews as Jews of Spanish origin, which is again a misrepresentation. As a document in Şimşir's own book shows, all Spanish Jews were recalled to Spain before the end of April 1943.⁶¹⁷ Thus, his conspiracy theory that international Jewry collaboratively tried to mislead the Turkish government by misrepresenting these Spanish Jews as ex-Turkish is another example that portrays Jews with the stereotypic image of an international power that deceives other nations.

6.3.2 Re-evaluation of Arnold Reisman's Assertion

In his recent book⁶¹⁸, Reisman asserts that “percentage-wise few Turkish Jews were taken to the death camps”⁶¹⁹ compared to French Jews.⁶²⁰ Taking 12,000 as the number of Turkish Jews residing in France alters Reisman's assessment considerably. But, more importantly, it is his identification of all 87,500 Jews who were deported from France as homogenously French Jews that creates the biggest error in his evaluation. Even a quick look at the deportation lists reveals

⁶¹⁶ Communication written by the Turkish Foreign Minister Numan Menemencioğlu to Prime Minister Ismet İnönü, October 21, 1942. BCA- Turkish Prime Ministry Archives no.: 030.10.232.564.20.

⁶¹⁷ From Paris General-Consulate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1944. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc, no. 59, p. 489. A previously mentioned document in the SSC also confirms the return of Spanish Jews to Spain. From the Consulate-General in Paris to the Consulate-General in Marseilles, January, 20, 1944, SSC, doc. no. 332. See also section 4.4.7 in Chapter 4 about Spanish government attitude towards Spanish Jews in France.

⁶¹⁸ Reisman, *An Ambassador and a Mensch*, (Lexington, KY: Private Publisher, 2010).

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. v, 231.

⁶²⁰ On Reisman's approach in relation to the fate of Turkish Jews in France during the war years see Chapter 4, p. 13.

that particularly in 1942, the convoys predominantly consisted of former Jewish citizens of either Germany-Austria or German occupied countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia and Greece, or nationalities of allies of Germany like Hungary and Romania. Germans had a completely free hand in deploying their racial policies for these countries' nationals, especially for the first group. For example, among the stateless Jewish groups, Polish Jews were one of the largest and about 60% of them perished in the Holocaust.⁶²¹ On the other hand, as Klarsfelds pointed out, the number of French Jews (French origin and naturalized) deported was just 24.000.⁶²² Thus, Reisman's assertion that "a French Jew without Turkish roots had a 3.7 greater chance of having perished in Hitler's ovens than his French cohorts who had some Turkish connection"⁶²³ appears to lack factual basis. A reevaluation with the corrected data and a somewhat rigorous description of French Jews suggests at least the same, if not higher percentage of Jews of Turkish origin deported compared to those of French origin.⁶²⁴ On the other hand, in the deportation lists presented by Klarsfelds, there were almost no Jews from other neutral countries like Switzerland or from Italy which was adamant in protecting her Jews despite being a German ally.

⁶²¹ See Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Persecution*, (London: Orion Books, 2007), p. 220, and Klarsfeld & Klarsfeld, "Tableau de Nationalites des Deportés Juifs de France," p. xix. (Klarsfeld's book has no page numbers. The referred page number is given by I. I. Bahar.)

⁶²² Klarsfeld & Klarsfeld, p.xix.

⁶²³ Reisman, p. v.

⁶²⁴ In such a calculation, if the population of French Jews is taken as half of the total Jewish population, i.e., 175,000, then the percentage of deportation of both groups become almost equal. See Marrus and Paxton, p. xiv. However, it is more reasonable to think of the number of original and naturalized French Jews as more than half of the total Jewish population of France. Indeed, according to an estimation of Robert S. Wistrich, in 1940 there were 195,000 native French Jews out of a total population of 330.000. See Robert S. Wistrich, *Hitler and the Holocaust*, (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), p. 170. Actually, Marrus and Paxton gave half of the Jewish population in France as foreign-born. Thus, it is quite logical to consider that a percentage of those foreign-born Jews had been naturalized and gained French citizenship through marriage and other means.

Reisman's presentation of alleged activities of "the Turkish legation headed by Ambassador Behiç Erkin" as the main factor behind the relatively low percentage of deportation of Turkish Jews also needs careful examination. One cannot ignore the cautious German Foreign Office policy of not offending the neutral countries in general and Turkey in particular. Using German documents, Browning demonstrates how, in February 1943, when the Turkish general consul in Paris submitted to the Gestapo (Sipo-SD) a list of only 631 Turkish Jews living in Paris, leaving out the remaining 2,400, it was the intervention of an officer in the Foreign Office that prevented their deportations.

The Turkish Jews were saved, however, by the actions of a single man, Wilhelm Melchers of the Near East Desk in the Political Division, who demonstrated what one man could do with the proper courage, invention, and determination. ... He now intervened for the Turkish Jews who had been abandoned by their own government. He requested that the deportation of these 2,400 Jews not be carried out. They posed no security risk, but their deportation would be exploited by enemy propaganda and raise a storm of indignation in the Turkish press. *It was of no significance that Turkish diplomatic representatives had shown no interest in them.* Germany had to be especially cautious to create no pretext which could bring difficulties with Turkey.⁶²⁵

6.3.3 The number of "regular" Jews who returned to Turkey

Various consular communications reflect that about 560 "regular" Jews returned to Turkey in railway convoys organized by the Paris General Consulate.⁶²⁶ The table compiled from these sources can be seen in Appendix B, page 272. A communication written by the Paris Consulate-

⁶²⁵ Browning, p. 156. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁶²⁶ Shaw asserts that "approximately one thousand Turkish Jews [were] sent by small boats from the coast of the French Riviera between February 2 and May 25, 1944." See Shaw, *Turkey & Holocaust* p. 199. None of the documents confirm or give the slightest hint of such an operation. Şimşir states that during the war, because of adverse conditions, any travel by sea was out of question. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 86.

General on October 16, 1942 indicates that the convoy of September 25 was the first one, and its organization was realized after long efforts.⁶²⁷ The communication implies that the majority of the 38 passengers in the convoy were Jewish, but we do not have a definite figure. Another communication explicitly indicates the departure of the second convoy on March 15.⁶²⁸ Actually, from Ambassador Behiç Erkin's memories, we know that this second convoy consisted of two railway cars.⁶²⁹ Corinna Guttstadt, basing her work on German documents, confirms this information and presents the departure of the convoy on two consecutive days March 15 and 16, and the total number of passengers as 121.⁶³⁰ After this second convoy, due to Turkish government visa restrictions, no convoys were apparently organized until February 1944. A communication of July 7, 1943, sent from Ankara, indicates special permission for issuing passports to 51 individuals of military age.⁶³¹ However, none of the documents available suggest the organization of a convoy for them. In the first five months of 1944, as listed in a consular communication,⁶³² eight additional convoys were organized and 414 regular Turkish Jews were able to return to Turkey.

Other than these convoys, some *regulars* who had valid passports might succeed in returning to Turkey by their own means. It is difficult to estimate their numbers. However, due to the adverse war conditions, which made railway travel difficult, as well as the complexities to obtain necessary transit visas from countries along the way, the number of these *regular* citizens could not be very high. Indeed, in a communication of April 1943, sent to Ankara, the Marseilles

⁶²⁷ From the Paris General Consulate to Paris Turkish Embassy at Cichy, October 16, 1942. SSC doc. no. 128.

⁶²⁸ From Paris General Consulate to *Commisariat General aux Questions Juives, March 12, 1943*. Quoted by Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p.187.

⁶²⁹ Erkin, p. 542.

⁶³⁰ Guttstadt, "Really an Unbelievable Story", p. 59, 65.

⁶³¹ From the Paris General Consulate to the Marseilles General Consulate, July 7, 1943. SSC doc. no. 155.

⁶³² From the Paris General Consulate to the Paris Embassy, May 31, 1944. SSC doc. no. 178.

General-Consul complained that “since 1941, the Turkish citizens who have received passports were not able to depart from France because of the existing difficulties of the war.”⁶³³ Furthermore, a communication of October 1942 shows that German authorities were permitting the return of Turkish citizens only if they formed organized groups, but not as individuals.⁶³⁴ In fact, the consular communications refer to a German ban on the issuance of exit visas during the months of autumn 1942.⁶³⁵ What’s more, as explained above, during the period between spring 1943 and January 1944, in line with instructions given from Ankara, it was not possible to receive a passport from the consulates. Likewise, in the first half of 1944, there was no need for an individual initiative since there were organized convoys for those who desired to go to Turkey. In summary, the individual successful attempts to return to Turkey were presumably rather small, if not minimal, in number. Obviously, the return of irregulars to Turkey was out of the question, as they were not given Turkish passports or visas.

6.3.4 Analysis of Deportation Lists

A closer analysis of the 77 deportation convoys sent from France to the death camps in Poland could give us some additional insight into the situation of Turkish Jews. And more importantly, our analysis could be used to verify the evaluations made in our preceding chapters and the present one. Since we do not have definite data on the nationality of the victims on the

⁶³³ From the Marseille Consulate-General to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 1, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 96, p. 267.

⁶³⁴ From the Paris General Consulate to the Paris Turkish Embassy at Vichy, October 16, 1942. SSC doc. no. 128. As explained earlier, in January 1943 the Turkish government forbade the formation of convoys.

⁶³⁵ See Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc no. 22, 24, 27, p. 201, 204.

deportation lists,⁶³⁶ we will take as basis the deportees who were born in any city in Turkey. A table (Table 3) showing the number of those victims in each deportation round is presented in Appendix C, page 274. As can be seen, the total number of deportees adds up to 1,515. Of course, every Jew born in a city in Turkey may not necessarily have been a Turkish Jew. Thus, this criterion may lead us to overestimate the number of Turkish Jews who were deported. On the other hand, as a compensating factor, our table also does not contain the children of the Turkish Jews who were born in France and who were deported with their parents. By the same token, there could also be some other omissions, e.g., older Turkish citizens whose birthplace was not within the borders of today's Turkey but within the territories of the former Ottoman Empire.⁶³⁷ At any rate, since our analysis will be a qualitative comparison, rather than delivering absolute figures, Table 3 can be used for extracting some results and verifying our conclusions. Using the data in this table, we can construct new tables and graphs that can assist us in visualizing the trend in the deportations of Turkish Jews during the last three years of the war.

For a closer analysis, Table 4 in Appendix C, page 278 illustrates the monthly distribution of deportations. Examination of Table 4 and Figure 1 shows that the Germans systematically and diligently began to organize regular convoys to the extermination camps in Poland, particularly after June 1942. Indeed, as seen from the comparative analysis of the data referring to years 1942, 1943 and 1944 in Table 4 and Figure 4, the last seven months of 1942 were the most active period in the whole deportation process: 57 % of the total deportees, i.e., 41.951 victims out of the total 73.332, were deported in 45 convoys (out of 77) in this seven

⁶³⁶ After Alois Brunner became the chief commander of the Drancy camp and deportations, with understandable reasons, the German authorities preferred systematically to suppress both the nationality and birthplace of the deportees in their lists. The birthplaces of these victims of the convoys of the period between July 1943 and August 1944 were reconstructed later by Klarsfelds by using French sources. See Klarsfeld & Klarsfeld, p. iv.

⁶³⁷ Guttstadt gives the total deportation of Jews of Turkish origin as 2,080. Her figure includes French-born 290 children who were deported with their parents. See Guttstadt, *Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*, (Belin: Assziation A, 2008), p. 402.

month period. Interestingly, in the same period only 33% of the Jews of Turkish origin were deported to the death camps in Poland. In other words, as the eighth column of Table 3 reflects, the average percentage of Turkish Jews over all deportations is 1.19%. This result matches the facts squarely. As in the earlier years of the war, Germans were careful to exclude Jews of neutral countries from their racist policies during the year 1942.⁶³⁸ In fact, it was in the last months of 1942 that Germany gave its first warning to neutral countries and set the 1st of January 1943 as the deadline for the complete return of their Jews.

The figures for the year 1943 show an increase in the deportation of Turkish Jews with respect to total deportations in terms of percentage. In the entire year of 1943, the total number of Jewish deportees was 17,069 and constituted 23.6% of the total deportations. The percentage of Turkish Jews was 22.8% - close to the general percentage and furthermore, with an increase constitutes 2.02% of the total deportations of 1942. Thus, this new percentage indicates an increase of more than 69% (Table 6-Column 9) in the percentage of the deported Turkish Jews with respect to the previous year. The Germans were therefore less careful to exclude Turkish Jews from deportation in 1943, and Turkish Jews were interned and sent to the death camps in Poland almost as readily as other Jews. These data parallel the explanations given in Chapter 4 and the communication of July 1943 sent by the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish embassy in Berlin.⁶³⁹ Throughout 1943, the Germans sought to persuade Turkey to declare a definite policy in terms of her Jewish citizens in France. In the face of Turkish reluctance to declare a clear policy and foot-dragging to recall her Jews, Turkish Jews presumably lost their somewhat protected status and were treated no differently than other Jews.

⁶³⁸ During 1942, the United States was the most important neutral country, and as documents show, the U.S. raised constant diplomatic objections to German Jewish policies. See FRUS, 1940, v. 2 pp. 565-570, 1941, v.2, pp. 503-512.

⁶³⁹ See page 204, for the text of this communication.

Indeed, as explained earlier, an unfavorable change in the German attitude towards Turkish Jews can be seen clearly in the consular documents of the period.

A drastic change is observed in 1944. In late December 1943 and early January 1944, with increased German pressure, the Turkish government finally agreed to withdraw her citizens, and the Turkish diplomats presented definitive lists of Jews whose return to Turkey was permissible. This development gave the Germans a free hand to deport all other Jews who claimed to have Turkish origins.⁶⁴⁰ Indeed, as can be seen from all three tables, 4, 5 and 6 and associated graphs, the deportation of Turkish Jews increased significantly at this time. The greatest percentage of Turkish Jews, i.e., 44.19% was sent to death camps in the first seven months of 1944, just before the liberation of France in August. In the same period, the percentage of deported Turkish Jews with respect to general deportations jumped to a high percentage of 4.66. This percentage was 292% higher compared to 1942 and 130% compared to 1943 (Table 6 – Columns 8, 9 and 10). Figure 3 also shows that in all of the months of 1944, the percentage of deportations of Turkish Jews was much higher than the percentage of general deportation. With these existing documents, the higher percentage of deported Turkish Jews in 1944 can be seen as further evidence refuting the idea that all Turkish Jews without distinction were saved by the intervention of the Turkish government in 1944. On the contrary, the deportations were more intense and harsher in this period. It seems that personal success in hiding, increased French resistance to turn Jews in, and, more importantly, the liberation of France, rather than any intervention, were what was actually instrumental in saving the rest of the Jews of Turkish origin from perishing in Polish extermination camps.

⁶⁴⁰ Interestingly, one of the highest percentages of deportation of Turkish Jews was carried out with convoy no. 66 on January 20, 1944. This convoy departed just after the submittal of the aforementioned consular lists. (See Table 3, page 278 and Figure 2, p. 283 in Appendix C).

6.4 CONCLUSION

This comprehensive analysis of the situation of Turkish Jews in France during WWII leads us to four main conclusions:

First, the Turkish government did not appear to have shown any concrete intention to rescue its Jewish citizens in France who were under the threat of deportations, particularly in the last months of 1942. On the contrary, with mass denaturalization and nationalization policies, the government was clearly reluctant to take back a sizable portion of its Jewish citizens in France and was easily able to avoid doing so by obstructing the issuance of visas. Careful chronological examination of the accessible Turkish documents of the war years attests to this abandonment of Turkish Jewish citizens by the Turkish government. Only in December 1943, with the obvious defeat of Germany on the horizon and with the realization that only a small number of Jewish citizens would return, did the government give consent to their transportation to Turkey.

Second, the documents presented in the present study attest that irregular Turkish citizens, who were the bulk of Jews of Turkish origin in France, were consistently and unexceptionally excluded from any kind of official Turkish protection throughout the war years.

Third, the Turkish diplomatic delegation in France had limited capacity and initiative to act in favor of regular Jewish citizens in particular and other Jews of Turkish origin in general. As stated clearly by Şimşir, it was not reasonable to wait for diplomats to act against instructions and well-established hierarchical diplomatic conventions. Diplomats had their limitations. A non-conformist act against the regulations could endanger both the diplomat's reputation and his

career.⁶⁴¹ On this point, an entry from the memoir of Ambassador Erkin, who had a particular reputation as an “independent personality,”⁶⁴² is self-explanatory:

I had informed Ankara about our subjects the majority of whom were Jewish and had lost their homes during the evacuation of the old port of Marseilles. As an answer, they told me: “not to send Jews by train convoys.” *I informed them that I interpreted this instruction not only as an answer to my cable but as a definite order.*⁶⁴³

The documents further show that the Turkish diplomatic delegation in France indeed acted within the borderlines imposed by the ministry. Except for Monsieur Reutier’s case, there is not any hint suggesting that irregular or ex-citizen Turkish Jews received any kind of personal protection from the consulates. In contrast, the documents show that the Turkish diplomats may have deliberately given the list of *irregulars* to the German authorities and probably caused these irregulars’ deportation. In this general framework, the accounts of some diplomats of the period describing, for the first time and after almost 50 years, how Turkish Jews in France “who did not hold valid Turkish IDs or passports” were saved and the lack of testimonies confirming these accounts, raise concerns on the validity of these accounts. On the other hand, it is plausible to think that many details of those days perished forever with the victims of the Holocaust.

It would be more accurate to think that, rather than the Turkish government’s stance and its diplomat’s actions, it was the German Foreign Office’s oversensitivity to not create grounds for consequent retaliations, particularly in the first three and half years of the war, that might have played a role in the less destructive fate of Turkish Jews in France.

⁶⁴¹ Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, p. 16.

⁶⁴² During Turkey’s war of Independence, Behiç Erkin, as Ankara’s top governmental officer, administrated railway transportation. He had a reputation that he could easily refuse to carry out an issued order and ask to change it if he thought it not proper. Atatürk used to give surnames to his entourage according to their contribution to the Independence War and personalities. The surname “Erkin” was also given by Atatürk and it means “independent.” See Emir Kıvrıkcık, *Büyükelçi* [The Ambassador] (Istanbul: GOA Basım Yayın ve Tanıtım, 2007) p. 157.

⁶⁴³ Behçet Erkin, *Unpublished Memoir*, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Archival Collections, call Number: 2009.42, p. 542. Emphasize added by I. I. Bahar.

Fourth, the information that in the first half of 1944, in the months before the liberation of France, irregular Turkish Jews were saved through Turkish intervention is not correct. U.S. Ambassador Steinhardt played the major role in this misrepresentation in the literature. His misleading statements and reports have unfortunately been adopted in later years without any critical investigation by historians writing on the fate of Turkish Jews in France. The rescue of Turkish Jews in France during World War II has continued to be an undisputed historical fact until the present. Newer evidence from archival collections and a critical reading of the published literature, alas, lead to an all together different conclusion on the fate of that community of victims of the Nazi assault.

7.0 EPILOGUE

This study aims to investigate in depth two incidents that have been widely presented in literature as examples of the humanitarian and compassionate Turkish Republic lending her helping hand to Jewish people who had fallen into difficult, even life threatening, conditions under the racist, inhuman and criminal policies of the Nazi German regime. The first incident involved recruiting more than one hundred Jewish scientists and skilled technical personnel from German-controlled Europe for the purpose of reforming outdated academia in Turkey. The second incident involved the rescue of Jews of Turkish origin as well as those of non-Turkish origin from France during the WWII. Both events were vociferously introduced to the world for the first time in the early 1990s, within the discourse of the newly founded Quincentennial Foundation to commemorate the immigration of Jews to the Ottoman Empire following their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

The colorful presentation of these two events in publications and activities of the Foundation, and more importantly, the embrace, endorsement, and aggrandizement of these incidents, along with the inherent message they conveyed, by powerful international Jewish lobbying organizations paved the way for the recognition of these two events as collective public knowledge. Without critical consideration or thorough investigation, the caring, protective, and savior attitude of Turkish authorities toward Jews, as claimed by the original discourse, found wide acceptance as a well-established and an indisputable fact. Moreover, both in Turkey and in

the international media, recent years have seen a stronger emphasis on the creation of “an example to humanity” image of Turkey in the collective memories, with the help of the pop culture nourished by means of epic films produced with rich dramatic effects, as well as attractive novels embellished by fictitious events and heroes, and publications and TV programs that superficially introduced and discussed these events. The dynamic changes in world politics and power balances, never ending turmoil in the Middle East and Israel’s delicate position, the strategic location of Turkey as a secular Muslim country in this turbulent geography, and most importantly, the critical status of the Turkish Jewish community and her complex, subtle relationship to the Turkish establishment, were all factors that contributed to the build-up and non-critical recognition of the protector-of-Jews image of Turkey that these two events unquestionably implied. What really happened with regard to these two incidents, what was the role of Turkey, and what really were her intentions and policies are the main questions this study aims to answer.

In his monograph, *History – Remembered, Recovered, Invented*, Bernard Lewis states that history can be defined and subdivided in different ways. He presents the most salient ways of division among “many others”:

... traditionally, by who, and when, and where; then, in a more sophisticated age, by topic – by what, and how, and, for the intellectually ambitious, why; methodologically, by types of sources and the manner of their use; ideologically, by function and purpose- of the historian more than the history ...⁶⁴⁴

Lewis interestingly points to another classification of history, according to its essence. In this classification, there are three types of history. The first is remembered history. It can be

⁶⁴⁴ Bernard Lewis, *History – Remembered, Recovered, Invented*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 13.

described as “the collective memory of a community or nation or other entity.”⁶⁴⁵ The second type is recovered history. This type of history is reconstruction of the earlier periods based on discovery and reassessment of the past by critical scholarship. The last is invented history. This is a purposive history, created and interpreted from former types of histories where possible, and made-up where not.

To separate facts from myths, if there are any, and to reconstruct the real nature of events in chronological order, basing every single statement on historical documents as critical scholarship necessitates, was the task of this study. The two incidents of our subject matter certainly deserve to be remembered, recovered and recounted in their correct context as they should be.

7.1 THE QUINCENTENNIAL FOUNDATION

The narrative began in the 1980s when an idea emerged from the Turkish Jewish community that Turkish Jews should commemorate an important turning point in their history. 1992 was the 500th year of the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain and the presumed date for their arrival in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴⁶ In the very beginning, the initial intention of the Turkish Jews was to celebrate this event mostly within the country, with local intra-community activities⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁴⁶ The migration of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire took a few decades. Most came indirectly stopping off in North Africa, in the Mediterranean islands or in Italy. An important group who first took refuge in Portugal and continued to live as crypto-Jews, the *Marranos* were obliged to leave that country with increased threats by the Inquisition and came to the Empire relatively later.

⁶⁴⁷ Vitali Denis Ojalvo, *Turkish Jewish Lobbying*,

<http://www.turkyahudileri.com/content/view/360/222/lang,tr/>. (Accessed in January 2012). Ojalvo did his master thesis on Turkish Jewish lobbying. See Vitali Denis Ojalvo Oner, *Le Lobbyisme Juif En Turquie*. Université de Galatasaray, Institut des Sciences Sociales.

and to use this occasion as a means to express their loyalty to the Turkish establishment in a way similar to what their ancestors did a hundred years ago. However, as the anniversary date approached and related celebration intentions were presented to Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal in January 1984, the original, rather modest plans for commemoration took a completely new turn.⁶⁴⁸ The government's proposal in response to the Turkish Jews' initiative was to hold larger-scale celebration events and programs, with greater publicity so as to attract wider international interest. In order to celebrate the event internationally in as grandiose a manner as the government suggested, a new organization, the Quincentennial Foundation, was established in July 1989 with the collaboration of leaders in the Turkish Jewish community. The Foundation consisted of 113 founding members: 73 Jewish members, mostly distinguished businessmen and prominent members of the Turkish Jewish community; 40 carefully selected Muslim founders, who were well-known intellectuals and industrialists; and retired high level state officers or diplomats, usually known for their affinity to Jewish people and matters. In the agenda of the Foundation, the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire was a façade and a stepping stone. The real purpose was not simply to celebrate a historic event that happened 500 years ago but rather, to use the event for an occasion to organize an effective campaign to exalt and refurbish modern Turkey's image abroad. Indeed, this mission "to remind the whole world, by all available means, [of] the high human qualities of the Turkish people as Nation and State"⁶⁴⁹ was the opening paragraph of the declaration that summarized the main purposes of the Foundation.

The organization of such an international campaign, particularly in the U.S. and through the initiative of Turkish Jews, was seen as very advantageous by the Turkish establishment for

⁶⁴⁸ Bali, *Devlet'in Örnek Yurttaşları (1950-2003)*, p. 356.

⁶⁴⁹ *The Quincentennial Foundation- A Retrospection ...*, p. 4.

several reasons. First, Jews or Jewish organizations were viewed as highly influential in the American political system and as playing an important role in shaping world public perceptions and opinions. Thus, there was the expectation that a campaign of their brethren from Turkey on the issue of benevolence shown to Sephardic Jews historically would make considerable noise and attract significant attention and recognition in favor of Turkey. In the 1990s, Turkey was under harsh criticism from international circles and facing opposition of the Greek lobby to the American congress due to its on-going military presence in northern Cyprus. The support of American Jewish organizations through the campaign of the Foundation would help to neutralize the obstructive activities of opposing lobbies in the U.S. Congress.

Second, to ascribe such favorable humanitarian characteristics to Turkey and Turks by Turkish Jews, one of the religious minorities of the country, had special significance because Turkey had a tarnished reputation in the West due to her problematic historic relationships with minorities. As Bali stated, the Jewish initiative was giving valuable ammunition to Turkey to cope with harsh accusations about her minority policies:

By stressing among the American [and international] public the message of Turkey and Turks' tolerant and humane treatment of their Jewish citizens, ... [it would be possible] to renovate Turkey's tattered image abroad, implicitly and explicitly communicating the message that all of the accusations of human rights violations, oppression of the Kurds and the Armenian genocide, are simply calumnies being spread by the country's detractors.⁶⁵⁰

1985 was the 70th year of the events of 1915 in which, Armenians maintained, more than one million Armenian lives were lost during harsh deportations enforced by the Ottoman Empire. Since then, with increasing fervor and insistence, the Armenian lobby had been pressing the Congress and White House to recognize this event as genocide and proclaim April 24 as the

⁶⁵⁰ Bali, "The Alternative Way to Come to Terms with the Past – Those Who Try to Forget: Turkey's Jewish Minority. http://www.rifatbali.com/images/stories/dokumanlar/those_who_try_to_forget.pdf (Accessed in January 2012).

commemoration day of this tragedy. The Turkish authorities assumed that the activities of the Foundation would effectively ensure the support of the Jewish lobby in coping with the efforts of the Armenian lobby whose success would be detrimental to Turkish interests. In fact, since 1982, the Turkish establishment had been seeking for effective means to get the support of American Jewish organizations⁶⁵¹ in the combat against anti-Turkish campaigns of Armenian and Greek lobbies.⁶⁵² Jak Kamhi and several other prominent Turkish Jewish businessmen were already working to fulfill this task as unofficial agents of the government.⁶⁵³

Howard M. Sachar notes how the endeavor of the newly founded Foundation became effectual and gained considerable American Jewish support:

The high-powered media campaign was [an] unqualified success. American Jews were won almost without reservation. Local Jewish communities participated enthusiastically in programs the foundation organized and often partially funded. At its Chicago convention in September 1990, the American Sephardi Federation adopted a resolution of “gratitude to the people and government of Turkey, and encouraged all members to participate in the 1992 “celebration in Turkey.”⁶⁵⁴

7.2 THE TWO ARGUMENTS

In the rhetoric of the Foundation, the effort to create a link with the past and the present was very conspicuous. In all Foundation activities and publications, the Ottoman Empire and Turkey were presented as if they were the same political entities. In fact, in the texts that describe the

⁶⁵¹ Bali asserts that in 1982, President Kenan Evren gave his approval for the establishment of a relationship with American Jewish organizations in accordance to the suggestions of the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Kamuran Gürün and the Turkish Ambassador in the U.S., Şükrü Elekdağ. Bali, *Devlet'in Örnek Yurttaşları* [The Example Citizens of the State]. (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2009), p. 271.

⁶⁵² In the 1980s the Armenian lobby was actively working to commemorate 1985 as the 70th year of Armenian Genocide and to pass a resolution in the U.S. Congress that would recognize the tragic death of vast numbers of Armenians in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire as an act of genocide. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 255-345.

⁶⁵⁴ Howard M. Sachar, p. 112.

Foundation's established goals or activities, there are frequent references to Turkey, the Turkish nation and Turkish people but very seldom to the Ottoman Empire. The presumed Ottoman humanitarian behavior and welcoming of the Sephardic Jewish immigrants in the early sixteenth century and the amicable sentiment shown toward Jewish subjects of the Empire are presented as carried out by the Turkish people or nation of that time who had "superior human qualities" and whose exemplary human character continued invariably as a constant, unbroken trait throughout several centuries up until the current time: "The savior hand that the Turkish people extended throughout centuries to those who suffered from cruelty and bigotry became a monument of honor for all nations."⁶⁵⁵ Implicitly, this rhetoric also suggests that the ethnic composition of the people and governing elites of the Ottoman Empire did not undergo any change during this long time span. According to this understanding, since today's Turkey and yesterday's Empire are interchangeable in the political sense and within its texture of people, it is quite reasonable "to reiterate the superior human qualities of the Turkish Nation" referring to modern times and to think that today's Turkey and its people equally deserve the respect and admiration of the world for what had been accomplished in the past. This conjecture can be clearly seen as the major notion in the description of Foundation's mission: "to help [today's] Jewish citizens [of the country] to express their gratitude to the Turkish Nation [of today] for [the] humanly act of five centuries ago."⁶⁵⁶

These two perceptions, the unique and unchanged character of the Turkish nation and the attribution of what happened five hundred years ago in the Ottoman Empire in that period's political conditions to today's Turkey along with the implicit suggestion that a harmonious

⁶⁵⁵ *The Quincentennial Foundation- A Retrospection ...*, p. 10.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

relationship with and affection for Jewish people remained unchanged in the Ottoman and the Turkish Republic eras, emerged as salient themes in the activities of the Foundation.

The bases of these two assumptions appear to be rather feeble. First, as explained in the opening chapter, the notion of a Turkish nation first emerged in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, and it was with the rise of the Turkish Republic that “Turkishness” crystallized as a nationalistic identity. In most of Ottoman history, there was no such self-identification or notion of Turkish people or nation. Turkish nationalistic consciousness appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century under the influence of similar nationalistic stirrings in Europe. Before then, Turkish identity was completely embedded within the wider Islamic identity without any political relevance.⁶⁵⁷ In the Empire, in accordance to the all-embracing Islamic principle of *Umma* i.e., the community of believers, there was no distinction among the believers and none of the different ethnic groups among the Muslim people had a recognized privilege or superiority or even an emphasized identity. David Kushner in his study on Turkish nationalism emphasizes the perception of “Turk” in the Ottoman Empire:

The essential division in the population of the Empire was between believers and non-believers. Turks did not enjoy any privileges over Arabs or other Muslim citizens. In fact, the government hierarchy, for example, appeared to favor non-Turks, so great was the number of functionaries brought into the service of the State from non-Turkish peoples.

... Even the words “Turk” or Turkey,” which were current among Europeans in reference to the Ottomans and their dominions, were not to be found in Ottoman writings, in this context, until well into the nineteenth century. The term “Turk” was used occasionally, but only to designate the ignorant nomad or peasant of Anatolia, often with a definite derogatory connotation or else to distinguish between a Turkish-speaking Ottoman and those who spoke other languages.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁸ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*. (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 1-2. The *devshirme* system in the Ottoman Empire was the most salient example for the practice of bringing non-Turks into the service of the State. Starting from the fourteenth century, the adolescent Christian children collected mostly from

Even in the early nineteenth century, in spite of newly emerging nationalistic notions, the term “Turk” had rather a pejorative connotation. Here is an excerpt from the notes of a European traveler:

... But if you say to Mohammedan in Turkey, “Are you a Turk?” he is offended, and probably answers, “I am Osmanli,” or the Turkish equivalent of these words. An Osmanli Turk, if he says a man is a Turk, would mean that he was a lout or a clodhopper.⁶⁵⁹

Second, the argument that there was a continuous and unchanged approach to Jews, both in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, and that Jews were treated in the same manner in these two different political entities was also baseless. Again, as explained in the first chapter, under the experience of Ottoman dissolution and influence of contemporary nationalistic political trends, Turkey was founded as a nationalistic political entity much different from the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Concomitantly, from the early days of the Republic, Jews did not have the same status as they had had in the Empire, and like other religious minorities, they were seen as foreigners, difficult if not impossible to be assimilated within the ideology of Turkism.

Balkans were converted to Islam and trained to be top ranking military commanders and civilian administrators. See William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*. (Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), p. 46.

⁶⁵⁹ Henry Charles Woods, *Washed by Four Seas* (London, 1908), p. 163. Quoted by Kushner, p. 20.

7.3 THE TWO INCIDENTS

7.3.1 German Jewish Scientists

In the campaign of The Foundation to connect the present with five hundred years ago and to support the idea that the humane, noble character and amicable feelings toward Jews continued in the era of Turkey, an event or events showing such a phenomenon as evidence was crucial. On this point, the recruitment of German Jewish scholars by the Turkish government to newly opened academic institutions beginning in 1933 gave a golden opportunity to the Foundation to introduce this recruitment as a humanitarian action with the deliberate aim of rescuing Jews. This approach was in contrast to presentations of the same event in earlier publications. For example, such emphasis and description of Turkish altruism is not evident in any of the published memoirs or in Horst Widmann's academic work of 1972, which was the most comprehensive study on the subject prior to 1990. A foreword written by the Chairman of the Foundation, Jak V. Kamhi, in a booklet published for the occasion of an exhibition reflects clearly this new tilt of meaning given to the event:

The coexistence of Moslem and Jewish people in the Turkish Society has a history of more than five hundred years. A coexistence of happiness and sorrow, in good and bad days, a togetherness that was never hampered by treason or oppression...⁶⁶⁰

The Quincentennial Foundation organized activities all over the world in order to reflect the beauty of this humanitarian approach. ...

Photographs and documents relating to the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic eras, are testimonies to the fact that in this Country, Moslems and Jews didn't only coexist, but were bound by a brotherhood.

⁶⁶⁰ These are the words typically said to groom and bride during a marriage ceremony.

Photographs of professors who fled Nazi oppression during World War II or before, and found shelter in Turkey, show to those who didn't know the historical evidence how the Turkish people embraced the persecuted. This is also a reminder to those who stay aloof in front of such inhuman actions.⁶⁶¹

In her book *East West Mimesis*, Kader Konuk also points out how in the 1990s the perception of the German Jewish scholars had shifted and how “in the wake of the quincentennial commemoration of the Sephardic Jews’ exile to the Ottoman Empire, Turkish scholars ‘rediscovered’ the émigrés of the 1930s as ‘Jews’.”⁶⁶² Konuk particularly criticizes their purposeful exhibition of the German Jewish émigrés in the Quincentennial Foundation Jewish Museum of Turkey that was established in 2001 under the sponsorship of the Foundation:

The museum exhibit interprets the hiring of German-Jewish academics as an act of great humanity on the part of the Turkish government. In so doing, it responds to the current political need to emphasize peaceful interactions between Jews and Muslims in Turkey, and yet it distorts the historical record.⁶⁶³

7.3.2 The Turkish Jews in France

The rescue of Turkish Jews in France during the Second World War is the second event which has been used as evidence of the protective and caring attitude of Turkey, reminiscent of the advent of Sephardic Jews to the Ottoman Empire 500 years ago. Again, in all the years of the post-war period up until the 1990s, we do not see any mention of this phenomenon in any publication as it was presented later by the efforts of the Foundation. For example, the prolific Turkish Jewish historian Abraham Galante, who had published more than sixty books and more

⁶⁶¹ *Exhibit of the Quincentennial Foundation- A retrospection ...*, p. 2.

⁶⁶² Konuk, *East West Mimesis- Auberbach in Turkey*, p. 22.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

than one hundred articles and essays⁶⁶⁴ mostly on the history of Ottoman and Turkish Jews, never mentioned this incident in his works. Non-existence of this specific subject that reflects the protective role of Turkey in his works becomes even more meaningful if we consider that Galante was known as a historian who “was always supportive of Turkish attitudes towards the Jews, [and] constantly praised the contribution of the Turks to the survival of the Sephardim.”⁶⁶⁵ It was the historian Stanford Shaw who introduced for first time the narrative of rescue of Turkish Jews from France. Interestingly, in the preface of his book *Turkey and The Holocaust*, Shaw mentions how he was informed about the subject during his visit to the office of Jak V. Kamhi, head of the Quincentennial Foundation where retired ambassadors Tevfik Saraçoğlu and Behçet Türemen⁶⁶⁶ were also present and how he saw for first time some documentation on “Turkey’s role in rescuing thousands of Jews from the Holocaust.”⁶⁶⁷ Shaw’s statement clearly verifies the idea that Turkey rescued Jews from the Holocaust, particularly from Nazi-occupied France, propounded first as an initiative by the Foundation in the early 1990s. Indeed, Shaw was the author of one of the most comprehensive books on Ottoman and Turkish Jewry, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* that came out in 1991, and in this book, under the section entitled “Turkish Jewry during World War II,”⁶⁶⁸ there was no mention of the event at all.

⁶⁶⁴ Among his works, *Histoire Des Juifs de Turquie* is a nine volume history of Turkish-Jewish history which encompasses up to the 1950s and is the most comprehensive one. (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1989). On Galante see Albert E. Kalderon, *Abraham Galante – A Biography* (New York: Sepher-Harmon Press, Inc., 1983).

⁶⁶⁵ Kalderon, p. 73. “Hostile campaigns against the Jews” and “Turkification” policies seen in the early years of the Turkish Republic highly motivated Galante in writing his works particularly on historical relations between Jews and Turks. With a sense of “strong and vibrant apologia,” in his works, he assembled “every available historical fact and document” that can be used to demonstrate the loyalty of Turkish Jews to the Turks and to confirm their usefulness and capability in the service of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. See Kalderon, p. 53.

⁶⁶⁶ Both retired ambassadors Saraçoğlu and Türemen were the founding members of the Foundation. See *500. Yıl Kuruluş Senedi- the Quincentennial Foundation Articles of Organization*. July 1989. Türemen selected as the first secretary-general of the Foundation.

⁶⁶⁷ Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. ix.

⁶⁶⁸ Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, pp. 255-258.

As shown in Chapter 4, with the publication of Shaw's book, *Turkey & the Holocaust* and his articles on the story of rescued Jews from Nazi-German occupied France in the Foundation publications, the savior image of Turkey was widely disseminated. Using Shaw's works explicitly or implicitly as reference, books, articles, movies, and novels were produced. Particularly, the documentary movie *Desperate Hours*, whose theme of the rescue of Turkish Jews from France was one of its main topics, was screened frequently at conferences on Turkish Jewry organized in different parts of the world and at social and cultural Jewish gatherings in the U.S. Despite its lack of scientific rigor, this movie played an important role in disseminating information about the event on a wide scale. There is no doubt that the newly produced movie *The Turkish Passport* which appeared in theaters in the fall of 2011, will give a new impetus to the outreach of this message intended for a larger audience.

7.4 TESTIMONIES OF TURKISH JEWS WHO WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO TURKEY

All the Turkish Jews who testified, except one,⁶⁶⁹ were among the 572 regular citizens who returned to Turkey with the eight convoys in 1944. Their testimonies gave these movies an important dramatic and persuasive character. In all these narrations, these individuals describe the hardships of Jews in France under German policies and how their Turkish citizen status brought them protection from the discriminatory policies and gave them the chance to leave France. Nevertheless, all these individuals, who were very young adults at that time, were not in

⁶⁶⁹ The only exception was Lazar Russo who departed for Turkey with the convoy of March 15, 1943. Interview with Russo on June 2, 2011.

a position to be aware of the real character of the background politics and decisions made about them. For example, they did not know why the convoys were not organized before January 1944. Nor did they know about the ban on the issuance of visas imposed upon regular Turkish Jewish citizens in the spring of 1943. Among these testimonies, two, those of Albert Saul and Robert Lazar Russo, describe how they were rescued from the Compiègne concentration camp by the intervention of the Turkish consulate in early winter 1942.⁶⁷⁰ In fact, their testimonies completely match what we know from the documents. But, again, in this case also, what these individuals did not know was what happened to other Turkish Jews like them. For example, they did not know that a significant number of Turkish Jews who were arrested and sent to camps at a later time were not released. On this point, it will be useful to remember a communication sent from the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish embassy at Berlin, referred to earlier in Chapter 4:

Starting from August 1941, within the scope of the operation to arrest and intern Jews, the Turkish citizen Jews have been collectively arrested and sent to various camps. Those Turkish Jews, like citizens of the other neutral countries, were released from the camps in the spring of 1942. ... However, in the last couple of months, the German authorities, aiming at forcing us to enable the return of those Turkish Jews who were arrested and sent to camps under trivial pretexts, began to inform us that Turkish Jews could be released only with the condition of their return to Turkey.⁶⁷¹

Again, Russo and Saul did not know why their compatriot Jews were not released from concentration camps like Drancy or Compiègne:

For one year now, there have been continuous demands by German authorities to neutral countries including Turkey to recall their Jews from occupied France.

⁶⁷⁰ Interestingly, these two Turkish Jewish young men of around 18, arrested on the same day, December 12 1941, were interned first in Paris, in the same place “Grand manège” of the “Ecole Militaire” with the rest of the group of 793 and transported on the same day late night, to the camp in Compiègne and stayed there about two months and never knew each other. On December 12 roundup see Zuccotti, p. 87.

⁶⁷¹ From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy at Berlin, July 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 132, p. 287. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

When we communicated this to our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were instructed that “The incoming of Jews as masses to the country was not desirable, and visas should not be issued before asking the approval of our central government.” Because of this instruction, while the Jews of all other neutral countries and of Germany’s allies left France, our citizens could not be sent to Turkey.⁶⁷²

It is worth noting that most of the testimonies, for example those in the movies, were given considerably after the rescue of Turkish Jews rhetoric was well established. Almost all of those individuals were identified in the mid 1990s and afterwards, parallel to increased popular interest. They were all interviewed numerous times by movie makers and media reporters as still living witnesses to the Turkish humanitarian and compassionate attitude. At the heart of the interest towards them, there was the expectation of hearing from them memories that confirmed the central myth. This established notion became so insistent that any testimony that suggested ambiguity was seen as marginal, not worth attention and, of course, not worth mentioning. The extract below taken from the interview done with Bahadır Arlıel, the producer of the film, *The Turkish Passport* is helpful in understanding this point:

Bahadır Arlıel: ...For example we were invited to one of them [A Turkish Jewish lady living in France]. She was a very pleasant lady. We went, “I made Beyoğlu [a district in Istanbul] scones for you” she said informally with her broken Turkish. She served tea, we sat. The shoes were removed in the entrance so and so... We had prepared an extract [movie] from the interviews that we had made; I brought that also with me. The train passenger lists were put on the table and she herself put some articles that she possessed from that time, we were talking. At one point, she said to us “you know, in reality something like this did not happen. Actually, Germans and Turks talked with each other, this was a situation that [Germans] said; okay, send them, we would not actually take them.” We had already talked with this woman earlier; I knew her. I knew her situation [personality]. She was not an ordinary woman, not a housewife type. She was a woman who does research. I was astonished; I said to myself what is this woman talking about ... Everything was in French, [he was talking about the movie] here and there were Turkish dialogues; other than that, there was nothing in Turkish. There were French under scripts and English conversations. “One minute” I said. “Look, they were explaining here, if there were no Turkish diplomats we would be dead, they said.” With a cynical

⁶⁷² From the Turkish Consul-General Fikret Özdoğanlı to Turkish Consulate-General at Marseilles, January 16, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 332. Translated by I. I. Bahar.

expression “it was not exactly like that” she said. “What was not like that?” I said to her. “Don’t you know these persons on the train?” I said. She drove me crazy. Not only myself, the woman, her closest friend who gave earlier interview to me, who came with me on train, and took me to her, also got mad. “Did you lose your mind? What kind of talk is this?” the woman said to her friend. But, she had her own arguments. After I went into [what she said], it was understood that there were other kind of relationships behind it.

Interviewer: So, did you stay indifferent to those arguments and documents?

Bahadır Arlıel: Of course I did.

Interviewer: Of course? Why?

Bahadır Arlıel: It does not interest me that because of other manipulations, she does not accept the reality that I put solidly on the table.⁶⁷³

In regard to the testimonies, it is also possible that the popular rhetoric that emerged after the 1990s also affected what the individuals remembered and the way they interpreted their memories. Under such influence, the individuals could easily internalize the elaborated representation of the alleged rescue and diplomatic protection, adopting some details from either idea as if to complete what they had experienced which they would then relate during the recounting of their stories. Louise Behar’s testimony during her interview is a good example showing such a biasing influence by the rhetoric on memories. At one point during her interview, Behar stated that the Turkish ambassador in France did a lot to rescue Jews from German persecutions. When she was asked how she knew about it or whether she had memories about such activities of the ambassador, she then responded that she had heard it in a conference in which she participated a few years ago and everybody knew it.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷³ *Reportare*, July 31, 2011.

http://www.reportare.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80:qthe-turkish-passportq&catid=58:t&Itemid=100, p. 13. (Accessed in January 26, 2012) Translated by I. I. Bahar.

⁶⁷⁴ Interview with Louise Behar, June 3, 2011.

Above all, how Turkish Jews self-identify themselves also plays an important role in these testimonies. As the observations of Marcy Brink-Danan reflect, the perception of non-Muslims in general, and Jews in particular, as foreigners in the first fifteen years of the Republic, as was described in the first chapter, apparently did not change much in the following years up to the present:

The Jewish community in Istanbul today is not segregated legally or politically from general Turkish society or institutions. However, as many historians have noted, this juridical position of equality was (and continues to be) imperfectly matched by widespread discrimination, social rejection, and suspicion of “foreigners.”⁶⁷⁵

It is quite plausible that this perception of being regarded as “foreigners” throughout the years since the Republic was founded contributed to the rise of a reciprocal conception of self-identity in the mindset of Turkish Jewry. Indeed, in these testimonies appearing towards the end of the 1990s, it is possible to see a common perception in the Turkish Jews’ appropriation of their citizenship status. In these testimonies, the protection of her own Jewish citizens by Turkey from threats and assaults (which should be the fundamental duty of every state and her diplomats) was regarded not as an evident “citizenship right” which every citizen should have access to indiscriminately, but as a “favor” bestowed upon them. Şule Toktaş also mentions that during the research she did in 2002 and 2003, the respondents from the Turkish Jewish Community that she interviewed mainly “associated citizenship with responsibilities rather than rights vis-à-vis the state.”⁶⁷⁶ According to her, such passive understanding of citizenship of Turkey was adopted more particularly by the older respondents.

⁶⁷⁵ Marcy Brink-Danan, *Jewish Life in 21st-Century Turkey*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), p. 11. Today about 90% percent of Turkish Jews live in Istanbul.

⁶⁷⁶ Şule Toktaş, “The Conduct of Citizenship in the Case of Turkey’s Jewish Minority: Legal Status, Identity, and Civic Virtue Aspects,” in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 26.1 (2006), p. 126.

7.5 TURKISH DIPLOMATS IN FRANCE

In the documents that we had access to, there is hardly a direct reference that reflects a special approach, or more correctly, an effort beyond a professional or routine approach, in dealing with the Turkish Jews residing in France. In several communications, such as those written by Bedii Arbel, the Consul-General in Marseilles (April 1940-June 1943)⁶⁷⁷ and Cevdet Dülger, the Consul-General in Paris (August 1939-May 1942)⁶⁷⁸ it is possible to see a reflection of feelings of affinity and a desire to be helpful towards Jewish victims. Ambassador Behçet Erkin's proposal urging the Turkish government to take measures against the properties of French citizens in Turkey as retaliation is also worth mentioning.⁶⁷⁹ However, as a common feature, available documents do not attest to any hint about implementation of any unusual protection or rescue action towards Jews at the personal or diplomatic level.

A communication sent by Paris Consul-General Fikret Şefik Özdoğanlı, mentioned earlier, is an exception.⁶⁸⁰ In this communication to the Consulate-General in Marseilles, Özdoğanlı specifies that in spite of the Turkish government's reluctance to permit the return of Jewish citizens to Turkey, it was he who convinced the government to accept their return, provided that the numbers of those regular citizens would not be high. The guaranty given by

⁶⁷⁷ An analysis of the documents in terms of the Turkish diplomat's interest in the dismal situation of the Jews reveals Arbel's close concern about the troubles of the Turkish Jews in his region. Several of his messages to the Ambassador contain his proposals to ease the return of Turkish Jews to Turkey or for a more effective protection of them. As two examples; Communication to the Embassy in Vichy, December 19, 1942. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 41, p. 217, Communication to the Embassy at Vichy, December 30, 1942, SSC, doc. no. 147. See p.139, note 349 about the refusal of his proposal on organizing convoys.

⁶⁷⁸ The communication to the Embassy in Vichy, February 10, 1941 is the most salient one. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 6, p. 443. In this communication Dülger explains his efforts to stop the appointment of French trustees to Turkish Jewish enterprises. See section 5.5 in Chapter 5.

⁶⁷⁹ From the Turkish Embassy in Vichy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1942. See section 5.3.3.2 in Chapter 5.

⁶⁸⁰ From the Consulate-General in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk YahudilerII*, doc. no. 59, p. 489.

Özdoğanlı presumably played an important role in the organization of the eight convoys between February 2 and May 23, 1944. Numerous documents reflect that Özdoğanlı, who saw the protection of all Turkish citizens including Jews as “his main duty,”⁶⁸¹ actively appealed to German authorities on matters concerning regular Turkish Jewish citizens. Particularly, after Ankara changed her position in late December 1943, the official appeals made by Özdoğanlı and his vice consul Namık Kemal Yolga to demand the release of Turkish Jewish interns of regular citizen status, especially those in Drancy camp, became highly intense.⁶⁸²

The available documents also reveal that the Turkish diplomatic interest was limited only to regular Turkish Jewish citizens and clearly excluded the rest whose numbers were substantially higher. This attitude was completely parallel to the articulated official policy and desire of the Turkish Government. Indeed, as a veteran diplomat, Şimşir strongly emphasizes that there was a strong, well-established institutional tradition of discipline in Turkish diplomacy, and it was not possible for Turkish diplomats to act on their own, taking personal initiatives, particularly on a subject that would be in conflict with the definite and restrictive orders given from Ankara.⁶⁸³ Turkish Honorary Lyon Consul M. Routier’s deliverance of forged documents to some Jews around Lyon was the only case of such conduct, but as explained in Chapter 4, this conduct was without the knowledge of Turkish diplomats and M. Routier was given a severe warning for his behavior.⁶⁸⁴ In contrast, again as explained in Chapter 4, documents reflect that first in early February 1943, and then, in January 1944, Turkish diplomats gave to German and French authorities the list of names of the limited number of Turkish Jews who were accepted as

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² For example, a communication sent to the German Military Command by the Consulate-General in Paris and signed by Yolga on January 17, 1944 gave the names of more than 30 Turkish Jews who were believed to be in concentration camps in France and asked for their liberation so that they could join the organized convoys to Turkey. See SSC doc. no. 345.

⁶⁸³ See the Conclusion section 6.4 of Chapter 6.

⁶⁸⁴ See section 4.4.2 in Chapter 4.

regular Turkish citizens, bringing about a precarious situation for those who were not on the lists. The first list submitted to German authorities presented only 631 Jews as regular Turkish citizens in Paris, thus leaving about 2400 unprotected;⁶⁸⁵ the second list informed the French authorities that 1,070 Jews who were of Turkish origin according to French records were not accepted as such by the Embassy. Notably, the second list was prepared by Ambassador Şevket Berker without any French or German request, or pressure, simply by his own initiative with the intention of correcting a list that the French had in their files.

7.5.1 The Testimony of Two Turkish Diplomats

The accounts of the two Turkish diplomats about their efforts to protect Turkish Jews and their properties in German-occupied France and to rescue them from deportations to the death camps constitute another important element of persuasiveness in the two aforementioned movies. These statements were from the only diplomats who were still alive in the 1990s and their accounts first appeared about fifty years after the war through the efforts of the Quincentennial Foundation. The testimonies of these diplomats, who were both retired well before the 1990s, were also pervasively used and frequently referred to in relevant literature. These two veteran diplomats were honored with the Distinguished Service Award of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001 together with Rhodes Consul Selahattin Ülkümen whose critical role in rescuing 40 plus Turkish Jews in July 1944 is well documented and verified.

⁶⁸⁵ Browning, p.155.

7.5.1.1 Namık Kemal Yolga

Namık Kemal Yolga was one of these two diplomats. He acted as vice-consul in the Paris Consulate-General throughout the war years. In the documentary movie *Desperate Hours*, Yolga emphasized the special attention given to protecting Turkish Jews in France: “Turkey was the only country in Paris that was protecting and trying to help Jews. Some other foreign countries had their Jews but none of them were taking care of them as we did.”⁶⁸⁶

Yolga’s description does not reflect the actual case and even contradicts what consular communications indicate. As explained in Chapter 4, Turkish consular documents reveal that as of spring 1943, among neutral countries, Turkey was the only one which had not accepted withdrawing her Jews.⁶⁸⁷ This stance increased the risk of deportation of Turkish Jews. Indeed, graphs based on deportation lists reveal that in contrast to 1942, i.e., the first year of deportations, there was an increase in the percentage of Turkish Jews among the deportees in 1943 and 1944. Furthermore, in several of the consular documents, there are references to the rather privileged treatment that the American, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian Jews had received, which was explained as a result of interventions by the diplomatic delegations of these countries.⁶⁸⁸ Yolga’s use of the term “Jews” in a broader sense was also misleading. Turkish diplomatic interest was limited to only a small portion of the Turkish Jews who were considered

⁶⁸⁶ Namık Kemal Yolga’s testimony in *Desperate Hours*.

⁶⁸⁷ From Consulate-General in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 4, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler II*, doc. no. 59, p. 489. See section 4.4.4 in Chapter 4.

⁶⁸⁸ The protection of Iranian Jews from racial policies and their exclusion from deportations was another example of an efficient diplomatic intervention. The Iranian consul in Paris, Abdol-Hosseïn Sardari succeeded in convincing the Germans that Iranian Jews were Jewish in religion but not in race. As a result, like Karaite Jews, Iranian Jews were exempted from German anti-Semitic policies and were able to survive the Holocaust with few losses. From the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, December 23, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 212, p. 344. See also Fariborz Mokhtari, *In the Lion’s Shadow- The Iranian Schindler and His Homeland in the Second World War*. (In Press, expected to be released in April 2012). For preview of the book see http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0066IY8MQ/ref=rdr_kindle_ext_tmb#reader_B0066IY8MQ (Accessed in February 2012).

regular citizens. By the same token, Yolga's testimony in Shaw's book also has some problematic points. For example, in this testimony, after mentioning that Jewish Turks living in "occupied" France at the time could escape many extremely dangerous situations as a result of the tremendous efforts of the Paris Consulate-General, Yolga refers to only one exception: "There was only one exception that I know of, one family living in Bordeaux was sent to Germany before we could protect them."⁶⁸⁹ Interestingly, numerous Turkish documents reveal that even among the regular Turkish citizens, a significant number ended up in Auschwitz and some of these documents that listed those Jews were either prepared by Yolga or addressed to him.⁶⁹⁰

From the analysis of the documents in our hand, it seems that under the directorship of Paris Consul-General Özdoğanlı, Yolga dealt with the problem of Turkish Jews in France in a professional manner as his job required, but not with any special attitude that could be described as extraordinary. On the other hand, during the short period between May and mid-July 1942 that he acted as consul-general,⁶⁹¹ it was Yolga, who reported to Ankara the matter of French-born children of regular Turkish citizens causing the termination of their protection if they were registered as French citizens at birth as French Law permitted.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁹ "Appendix 3, Testimony of Retired Ambassador Namık Kemal Yolga Regarding Jewish Turks in France during World War II" in Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 336.

⁶⁹⁰ See for example, the communication from the German Military Command in France to the Turkish Consulate – General in Paris, February 10, 1944. SSC, doc. no. 346. This communication was a response to Yolga's previous letter of January 17, 1944. See note 32 above. In this particular communication, the German Military Command was informing that 24 of the individuals whose names were given were not found in concentration camps in France. This reply implies that they were already deported to Auschwitz. Indeed, a search in the *Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names* in *Yad Vashem* reveals that some of them perished in the Holocaust.

⁶⁹¹ On April 30, 1942, consul general Cevdet Dülger returned to Turkey and on July 17, 1942 Özdoğanlı as the new appointed consul-general started his new assignment. During the period in between, Yolga acted as the consul general in Paris.

⁶⁹² See section 4.4.5 in Chapter 4.

7.5.1.2 Necdet Kent

The account of the second retired Turkish diplomat, the testimony of Necdet Kent, the Vice-Consul and later Consul at Marseilles during October 1941 and mid-1945, is the most striking account, relating a fantastic story about 80 Jews saved from deportation. Again, Kent told his story for first time in the early 1990s during his visit to the Quincentennial Foundation:

...

Our Consul-General was on leave for a time. One evening, a Turkish Jew from Izmir named Sidi Iscan, who worked at the Consulate as a clerk and translator, (he has also passed away, may God give him rest) came to my house in a state of considerable excitement. He told me that the Germans had gathered up about eighty Jews and had taken them to the railroad station with the intention of loading them onto cattle wagons for shipment to Germany. He could hardly hold back his tears. Without stopping to express my grief, I immediately tried to calm him and then took the fastest vehicle available to the *Saint Charles railroad station* in Marseilles. The scene there was unbelievable. I came to cattle wagons which were filled with sobbing and groaning people. Sorrow and anger drove everything else from my mind. The most striking memory I have of *that night* is the sign I saw on one of the wagons, a phrase which I cannot erase from my mind: "This wagon can be loaded with twenty head of large cattle and five hundred kilograms of hay." Within each wagon there were as many as eighty people piled on top of another. When the Gestapo officer in charge of the train station heard that I was there, he came to me and in a very cross manner asked me what I was looking for. With as much courtesy as I could force myself to summon, I told him that these people were Turkish citizens, that their arrest had been a mistake, and that it should be remedied at once by their release. The Gestapo officer said that he was carrying out his orders, and that these people were not Turks but were just Jews. Seeing that I would get nowhere by making threats which could not be carried out if they were fulfilled, I returned to Sidi Iscan and said, "Come on, let's board the train ourselves", and pushing aside the German soldier who tried to block my way, I boarded one of the wagons with Sidi Iscan beside me. This time it was the turn of the Gestapo officer to cry and plead. I couldn't listen to anything he said, and amidst the crying glances of the Gestapo officer, the train began to move. Since it was a long time ago, I cannot remember too well, *but I remember that the train came to a stop when we came either to Arles or Nimes.* A number of German officers climbed onto the car and immediately came to my side. I received them very coldly and did not even greet them. They told me that there had been a mistake, the train had left after I had boarded, the persons responsible would be punished, as soon as I left the train I could return to Marseilles on a car that would be assigned to me. I told them that it was not a mistake, that more than eighty Turkish citizens had been loaded onto this cattle wagon because they were Jews, that as a citizen of a nation as well as the representative of a government which felt that religious beliefs should not be the reason for such treatment, there could be no

question of my leaving them alone, and that was why I was there. The officers said they would correct whatever mistakes had been made and asked if all those in the wagon were Turkish citizens. All of the people around me, women, men, and children, stood petrified while they watched this game played for their lives. Most likely because of my refusal to compromise, as well as an order received by the Nazi officers, we all descended from the train together. After a time the Germans left us alone. I will never forget what followed. The people who had been saved threw their arms around our necks and shook our hands, with expressions of gratitude in their eyes. After sending them all on their ways to their homes, without even glancing at the Mercedes-Benz which the Nazis had provided for us, Sidi Iscan and I rented an automobile which operated by wood and returned to Marseilles. I have rarely experienced in my life the internal peace which I felt as I entered my bed towards morning of that day.

*I have received letters from time to time over the years from many of my fellow travelers on the short train ride of that day. Today who knows how many of them are still in good health and how many have left us. I remember them all affectionately, even those who may no longer remember me.*⁶⁹³

The episode that Vice-Consul Kent described, without specifying the date, seems to refer to the forced evacuation of the old port region of Marseilles by the Germans, which took place on January 22, and 23, 1943. Indeed, the communication sent from the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Embassy in Vichy on January 25, 1943 about this evacuation carries Kent's signature, thus verifying that Bedii Arbel, the Turkish Consul-General of Marseilles was not in the city during that specific time period.⁶⁹⁴ According to diplomatic regulations, vice consuls or consuls would sign dispatches that were sent to ambassadors only if the higher rank officer in charge, i.e., the consul-general himself in this case, was absent. In fact, among all the communications sent from the Marseilles Consulate-General to the Embassy, this communication is unique, and there is no other similar dispatch that carried Kent's signature.

⁶⁹³ "Testimony of Retired Ambassador Necdet Kent Regarding His Rescue of Jewish Turks at Marseilles during World War II." Appendix 4 in Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 341. Translated by Shaw. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar to underline the points that will be referred in the rest of the section. With a small difference Kent's testimony is also present in the Quincentennial Foundation publication; *A Retrospection...*, pp. 37-40.

⁶⁹⁴ From the Consulate-General in Marseilles to the Embassy in Vichy, January 25, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 65, p. 242. Also SSC doc. no. 209.

In this particular message, Kent explained how Turkish Jews were among the Jews who were arrested during the police operations and how he heard on that particular day that they were transported to some camps unknown to him.⁶⁹⁵ As an attachment to Kent's message, there was also a list of 9 regular Turkish citizen Jews who were apparently able to communicate to the consulate that they had been interned by the Police.⁶⁹⁶ The resemblance between these two events, i.e., the one above, in Kent's testimony given about fifty years later, and the second, described in his communication of January 25, 1943 written just days after the forced evacuation operation of the Old Port, certainly attracts attention and raises some questions. Other than this specific communication, among the whole set of Turkish documents there was none which could support in any way the above account of Kent's rescue.

Guttstadt is the only historian who has analyzed Kent's testimony critically and expressed her suspicion on the veracity of the account. Referring to the book written by Serge Klarsfeld on transportations done from Marseilles,⁶⁹⁷ she put forward that there was no data or record at all that verifies the transportation of such a comparatively large group of Turkish Jews.⁶⁹⁸ Moreover, she explains that she had completed numerous interviews with Turkish Jews living in Marseilles and came to the conclusion that nobody had any memory or knowledge about such an

⁶⁹⁵ A communication sent from the Marseilles Prefecture on February 9, 1943 indeed shows that those arrested during the evacuation operation were transported on January 24 to camp Compiègne in the morning hours. From the Police Directorship of Marseilles Prefecture to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles, February 9, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 64.

⁶⁹⁶ Guttstadt erroneously states that these nine arrested Jews were liberated upon interference of Kent. See Guttstadt, *Die Türkei ...*, p. 376. Documents show that they were not. See communication from German Military Command in France to the Turkish Consulate-General in Paris, February 10, 1944. SSC doc. no. 361. Also, communication from the Consulate-General in Grenoble to the Embassy, December 14, 1943. Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 204, p. 338.

⁶⁹⁷ Serge Klarsfeld, *Les Transferts de Juifs de La Region de Marseille Vers Les Camps de Drancy ou de Compiègne En Vue de Leur Deportation 11Aout 1942-24 Juillet 1944*. (Paris: Les Filles et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France, 1992).

⁶⁹⁸ Corinna Guttstadt, "Emir Kırırcık'ın Behiç Erkin Hakkında Yazdığı *Büyükelçi* Kitabı Üzerine Hakikaten 'İnanılmaz' Bir Öykü- Really an Unbelievable Story on Emir Kırırcık's Book of *the Ambassador*." On this point, Guttstadt's assertion seems erroneous. In his account Kent did not say that about 80 Jews who were arrested were Turkish Jews.

extraordinary incident that Kent recounted. By the same token, Guttstadt underlined that in spite of worldwide search efforts, Yad Vashem could not find even one survivor whose testimony could verify the event. Lastly, Guttstadt pointed out that the Saint Charles train station, which was the main train station in Marseilles and referred to by Kent, was “never used for such kind of transportation purposes during those years.” Indeed, the transportation done in the wake of this evacuation operation, which was known as *Operation Tiger*, was well-documented, and there are considerable number of images taken by German military photographers. All these sources show that *Gare d'Arenc*, a railroad station near the *Vieux Port* of Marseilles was the one used during this specific operation.

Besides Guttstadt's observations, Kent's account has some other doubtful aspects. First, let's look at the communication he wrote to the Embassy in Vichy on January 25, 1943:

It was understood from the received applications that among the people who were arrested in the broad police operations that started Friday night [January 22] and involved even home searches, a number of our citizens were also taken into custody. Since then, applications were made both to the governor's office and the Police directorate. The Police directorate told us that the affair was just a measure of security and promised that those arrested would be released in a few days after checking of their identity cards. *According to the news we received today, in contrast, those people were continuing to be transported to some camps outside Marseilles.* Faced with this situation, we applied again to the governor's office with the application attached. I am also attaching a list of our detained subjects who could succeed in finding a means to informing our consulate. ...⁶⁹⁹

A response from the Marseilles Police Directorate to the applications mentioned above was given on February 9.⁷⁰⁰ In the letter, after giving some brief information about Operation Tiger, the Directorate notified that indeed a train carrying foreign and French people had

⁶⁹⁹ From the Turkish Consulate –General in Marseilles to the Turkish Embassy in Vichy, January 25, 1943. Signed by Necdet Kent. SSC doc. no. 209. Also, Şimşir, *Türk Yahudiler*, doc. no. 65, p. 242. Emphasis added by I. I. Bahar.

⁷⁰⁰ From the Police Directorship of Marseilles Prefecture to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseilles, February 9, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 64.

departed for camp Compiègne on the morning of January 24.⁷⁰¹ The train mentioned in this official document was actually the only train that departed directly from Marseilles to Compiègne during the course of these events.⁷⁰² Numerous documents repeatedly verify this information. According to these sources, the initial total number of 5,956 arrests during this extensive roundup, later reduced to 1,949 upon the release of a large number of detainees, and “at least 782 Jews who had already been identified”⁷⁰³ were sent from the *Gare d’Arenc* with this train directly to Compiègne via the railroad through Arles and Nimes, the two train stations that Kent mentioned in his testimony. Since this specific train turned out to be the only train that departed from the center of the city to Compiègne, this train should be the one that the vice consul mentioned in his account. The next train that transported the rest of detainees of the *Vieux Port* affair to Compiègne was on January 31. However, this train could not be the train Kent mentioned because it did not depart from Marseilles, but from Fréjus about one hundred kilometers east of Marseilles.⁷⁰⁴

When we juxtapose our information about this specific train that took the detainees from Marseilles, the communication written by Kent to the Embassy and his above quoted account, it is not difficult to notice the inconsistent elements and to draw a conclusion. It seems that, for several reasons, Kent could not have been on this specific train, which was the only one that departed from Marseille. First of all, in the above communication, Kent said that he received the

⁷⁰¹ “... C’est ainsi qu’un train de français et d’étrangers a été dirigé dans la matinee du 24. I. sur le Camp de Compiègne ou ces personnes se trouvent actuellement sous la garde de la Police Français ...”

⁷⁰² In fact, this train was the only one that departed directly from Marseilles to Compiègne or Drancy during the two year period between August 11 1942 and July 24, 1944. Jews arrested in the Marseilles region were usually gathered first in concentration camp Milles and then transferred from there to Compiègne or Drancy. These two camps near Paris were used as departure stations to the death camps in Poland. See Klarsfeld, *Les Transferts de Juifs de La Region de Marseille Vers Les Camps de Drancy ou de Compiègne En Vue de Leur Deportation 11Aout 1942-24 Juillet 1944*.

⁷⁰³ Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p. 185.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

news about the deportation for first time on that day, i.e. on January 25. On that date the train was already in Compiègne or on its way to Compiègne since it departed on January 24. Moreover, in his account, Kent mentioned that it was nighttime when he arrived at the train station and boarded the train which departed afterwards. However, as the response of French Police Directorate shows, as do other sources, the train pulled out of Marseille in the morning,⁷⁰⁵ “at ten o’clock,”⁷⁰⁶ not at night. Also, another point from Kent’s testimony contradicts with the transportation details of January 24. According to Kent, he remembered an image from that night sharply:

The most striking memory I have of that night is the sign I saw [on] one of the wagons, a phrase which I cannot erase from my mind: “this wagon can be loaded with twenty head of large cattle and five hundred kilograms of hay.”⁷⁰⁷

Interestingly, there are a good number of photographs that show the cattle cars of the French railway company (SNCF) used for the transportation of the detainees on January 24.⁷⁰⁸ In two of these pictures, it is possible to read how the capacity of the French made cattle cars was marked. In one picture, the cattle car’s capacity rating was written as, “*Hommes* (People) 60 - *Chevaux* (Horses) 8” and in the other, “*Hommes* 40 - *Chevaux* 8.”⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁵ From the Police Directorship of Marseille Prefecture to the Turkish Consulate-General in Marseille, February 9, 1943. SSC, doc. no. 64.

⁷⁰⁶ Ryan, p. 186.

⁷⁰⁷ Kent’s testimony in Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 341.

⁷⁰⁸ The role of France’s state-run railroad, SNCF (Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer) in Holocaust is well documented. See the report commissioned by SNCF; Christian Bachelier “The SNCF Under German Occupation 1940-1944.” http://www.sncfhighspeedrail.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Bachelier-Report_Executive-Summary.pdf (Accessed in February 2011). In January 2012 SNCF handed over all of their archives of the years between 1939 and 1945 to the Holocaust Center in Paris, the USHMM in Washington D.C. and to the Yad Vashem in Israel.

⁷⁰⁹ These two photographs are in Klarsfeld, *Les Transferts de Juifs de La Region de Marseille Vers Les Camps de Drancy ou de Compiègne En Vue de Leur Deportation 11Aout 1942-24 Juillet 1944*. Actually, SS regulations called for 50 people per car, but often as many as 150 people were crammed into the cars. http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_people_fit_in_a_Holocaust_rail_car

The diaries of Raymond-Raoul Lambert can be seen as another valuable source for verification of Kent's account.⁷¹⁰ Lambert as the director of the General Union of Israelites of France (*Union Générale des Israélites de France* –UGIF) in the Zone of Military Operations⁷¹¹ was the senior Jewish official in Marseille during the cleansing of the Old Port. Thanks to his detailed diary, which reflects almost all aspects of the incident and corroborates many official reports of the time, we have a thorough picture of the event and the transfer of Jews on January 24 to Compiègne.⁷¹² In Lambert's diary there is no mention of Kent's extraordinary rescue or any one similar.

Most of the Jews of Marseille who were transported to Compiègne on January 24 and 31, were transferred on March 10 to Drancy. Convoy no. 52, which consisted mostly of these Jews, left Drancy for the Sobibor death camp on March 23. None of these deportees survived the Holocaust.⁷¹³ The percentage of Jews born in Turkey was highest in this specific convoy in comparison to the other convoys of 1943.⁷¹⁴

The rescue of about 80 helpless Jewish victims from a deportation train by the intervention of a Turkish diplomat, endangering his own life, was probably the most fascinating episode of the movie, *Desperate Hours*. In the film, besides Kent's own testimony, this striking story was recounted by Mordecai Paldi, the head of the "Righteous Among the Nations Department" of the Yad Vashem in an impressive manner, with dramatic animation. It seems at the time the film was shot Paldi, with the excitement of the unprecedented humanitarian and

⁷¹⁰ Raymond –Roul Lambert, *Diary of a Witness 1940-1943*, ed. by Richard I. Cohen. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1985) Lambert was arrested in late August 1943 and deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on November of the same year.

⁷¹¹ After the occupation by Germans of Vichy France in November 1942, in German and French terminology due to the French sensitivity about sovereignty, the "Unoccupied Zone" began to be called the "Zone of Military Operations."

⁷¹² Lambert, p. 169.

⁷¹³ Klarsfeld & Klarsfeld, "Convoi No. 52 en date du 23 Mars 1943" in *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*.

⁷¹⁴ See Table 3, "Turkey Born Deportees from France and their Percent in Each Convoy" in Appendix C, page 278.

heroic character of the episode, enthusiastically took part in the movie and colorfully described the exemplary act of Kent. However, in later years his approach reflects a more reserved tone:

Necdet Kent, the Turkish diplomat stationed in Marseilles, claimed to have boarded a deportation train in order to force the Germans to free a group of Jews who claimed to be Turkish nationals. He rode with them until Nimes, and the Germans finally relented and allowed him to take a group of Jews identified by him as Turkish nationals, and they were freed from that convoy. It is quite a fantastic story, told and repeated by Mr. Kent himself. I remember that when Mr. Kent visited Yad Vashem, I as the head of the “Righteous Among the Nations Department,” explained to him the need for evidence by at least some of the persons who benefited from his aid. He told me that he received a lot of thank-you letters from the persons and he would send them to me soon after his return to Turkey. I never heard from him again, and he has since passed away.⁷¹⁵ I tried to receive some confirmation of the story from the Jewish community in Marseilles, but without success. I retired from Yad Vashem in 2007, and the Necdet Kent case is still pending.⁷¹⁶

The only communication written by Consul Kent to the Embassy reflects that in the turbulent and dramatic days of the massive roundups and arrests during the evacuation of the Old Port, in the absence of his chief, Consul-general, Kent tried to act responsibly, doing his best to obtain the release of the arrested Turkish Jewish citizens. He was considerate and energetic, but his reaction was within the limits of a professional and sober diplomatic attitude. However, the deed Kent described in his account went far beyond this image. In the light of the questionable points above, Kent’s account which cannot be verified as yet by any other means continues to be doubtful unless some new evidence or testimony to justify the noble and brave act that he described emerges.

In this study we have reappraised two incidents whose veracities are considered to be almost undisputable. For more than two decades, these incidents have been used as primary examples in the dissemination of the message that Turkey is benevolently disposed toward Jews in general and toward her Jewish citizens in particular. Moreover, these incidents have been

⁷¹⁵ Kent passed away in September 2002 exactly one year after his visit to Yad Vashem.

⁷¹⁶ Personal communication with Mordecai Paldiel, April 11, 2011.

touted in publicity campaigns as proofs attesting that this benevolence towards Jews is a historic national characteristic of today's Turkey inherited from the distant past. With contributions from the Quincentennial Foundation, these two incidents and the intrinsic message that they contained without any real investigation have become part of universal popular knowledge. This study, after critical examination of the essence of these two incidents, comes to the conclusion that the representation of both of these events in academia, literature and the media to a great extent is erroneous, manipulative, and far from the truth. With intentions to rehabilitate the rather tarnished image of Turkey's minority policies before the international public, exploiting Jewish sensitivity about the Holocaust, a mythical history was created and promoted about the German Jewish professors who fled Hitler's Germany and about Turkish Jews in occupied France. Delicate political relationships and power balances in the Middle East as well as powerful sentiment of Turkey's Jewish community with a need to verify once more its loyalty to the state, facilitated the emergence of such an artificial and false history whose main goal was to serve the best nationalistic interests of Turkey.

Here, it is interesting to contemplate once more the three types of history that Bernard Lewis articulates; remembered, recovered, and invented history. Regarding invented history, with interesting examples mostly from the Middle East, Lewis describes how history can be shaped around an ideology or according to a policy, and how a historiography develops to verify such a created official history. Why are some events remembered and not others? And, how can a history or collective memory be built up to justify, undermine, or legitimate what is desired or not desired about our world? According to Lewis, to be in accord with the requirements of the present is the salient characteristic of this type of history and the drive that motivates its historians:

They would rather rewrite history not as it was, or as they have been taught that it was, but as they would prefer it to have been. For historians of this school the purpose of the past is not to seek some abstract truth, but to achieve a new vision of the past better suited to their needs in the present and their aspirations for the future. Their aim is to amend, to restate, to replace, or even to recreate the past in a more satisfactory form.

[The aim of invented history] is broadly to embellish – to correct or remove what is distasteful in the past, and replace it with something more acceptable, more encouraging, and more conducive to the purpose in hand.⁷¹⁷

The motives behind the recruitment of the German-Jewish scholars and especially the truth about what happened to Turkish Jews in France during World War II certainly need to be retrieved from the directive and misleading aims of an invented history. Our reappraisal of these events based on documentation and verifiable evidence casts an altogether different light on them and is intended to move these subjects from the realm of self serving propaganda to critical historical inquiry.

During the disastrous years of European Jewry, Turkey's lukewarm attitude was not different than the rest of the world. For example, there is considerable criticism against the U.S. questioning why she did not bomb Auschwitz and the railways going to the camp despite knowing what was happening in the camp. Indeed, such an act could certainly have saved tens, if not hundreds of thousands of Jews like Hungarian Jewry from being slayed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in the spring-summer of 1944.⁷¹⁸ Similarly, Britain's strict policies not to let Jews fleeing from the horror of the Holocaust into Palestine in any condition, like we see in the *Struma* Affair⁷¹⁹ can be seen as another inconsiderate act that took many lives. Numerous such

⁷¹⁷ Lewis, *History –remembered, recovered, invented*, pp. 55-56.

⁷¹⁸ Wyman, David S. "Why Auschwitz was never Bombed," *Commentary*, vol. 65, no. 5, May 1978, pp. 37-46.

⁷¹⁹ The *Struma*, was a ship chartered to carry Jewish refugees from Romania to British –controlled Palestine during WWII. British rejected to grant visa to its passengers and after wait of about 40 days in harbor of Istanbul, the ship was torpedoed and sunk with its 768 passengers one day after it was towed to the Black Sea. See Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *Death on the Black Sea*. (New York: Herman Collins Publishers, 2003).

examples could be propounded for other countries as well. Humanitarian values that are regarded very common and widely internalized by the intellectual society in our days were very weak or even nonexistent then, which could be one of the reasons of such indifferent attitudes. Or, it is also possible to say that in the chaotic years of the war, due to the delicate political balances and military strategies, to save the lives of the Jewish victims of the Nazi death machine was far from being the priorities of the time. Thus, as pointed out wisely by Guttstadt⁷²⁰ and reiterated by Hur in her newspaper article,⁷²¹ the attitude of the Turkish government and authorities was no different from that of other countries at the time. In this respect, there is no need for Turkey to feel embarrassed as long as “there is no fabrication of false stories and fake bravery accounts over the agonies of the Holocaust victims.”⁷²²

⁷²⁰ Guttstadt, “Really an Unbelievable Story”, p. 63.

⁷²¹ Hur, “The Legends of Turkish Schindlers” in newspaper *Taraf*, 16. 12. 2007.

⁷²² *Ibid.*

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF GERMAN ÉMIGRÉ SCHOLARS OF JEWISH ORIGIN

Table 1. GERMAN ÉMIGRÉ SCHOLARS OF JEWISH ORIGIN

<u>NO</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>ARRIV. DATE</u>	<u>DEPART. DATE</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>POST WAR</u>	<u>T1</u>	<u>T2</u>	<u>T3</u>	<u>T4</u>	<u>T5</u>
1	ALSLEBEN, ERNST	GERMANY	J	INTERN. MEDICINE	1935	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1936		1			
2	AMAR, LICCO	GERMANY	J	MUSIC/VIOLA	1934	1957	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
3	ANSTOCK, HEINZ	GERMANY	J	ROMANCE	1934	1946	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
4	ARNDT, FRITZ	GERMANY	J	CHEMISTRY	1934	1955	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
5	AUBERBACH, ERICH	GERMANY	J	PHILOLOGIST	1935	1947	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
6	BAADE FRITZ	GERMANY	WJ	COMMERCE	1934	1946/1948	ANKARA	U.S./GERM.			1		
7	BACK, GILBERT	AUSTRIA	J	MUSIC/VIOLA	1937	1946	ANKARA	U.S.					1
8	BOSCH, CLEMENS	GERMANY	WJ	ARCHEOL..	1933	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1955		1			
9	BRAUN, HUGO	GERMANY	J	MICROBIOLOGY	1933	1949	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
10	BRAUNER, LEO	GERMANY	J	BOTANIC	1933	1955	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
11	BREMER, HANS	GERMANY	J	BOTANIC	1937	1951	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
12	BRUCK, ERIKA	GERMANY	J	MEDICINE	1934	1939	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
13	CASPARI, ERNST	GERMANY	J	BIOLOGY	1935	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
14	DEMBER, HARRY	GERMANY	WJ	PHYSICS	1933	1941	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
15	DESSAUER, FRIEDRICH	GERMANY	J	PHYS./RADIOL.	1934	1937/1949	ISTANBUL	SWITZ./U.S.					1

<u>NO</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>ARRIV. DATE</u>	<u>DEPART. DATE</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>POST WAR</u>	<u>T1</u>	<u>T2</u>	<u>T3</u>	<u>T4</u>	<u>T5</u>
16	DIECKMANN, HERBERT	GERMANY	J	ROMANCE LANG.	1934	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
17	LINDENBAUM, GRETE	GERMANY	J	NURSING/RADIOL.	1933	1938	ISTANBUL	PALESTINE	1				
18	ECKSTEIN, ALBERT	GERMANY	J	PEDIATRICS	1935	1950	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
19	FRANK, ALFRED ERICH	GERMANY	J	INTERN. MEDICINE	1933	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1957		1			
20	FRANKL, PAUL	GERMANY	J	ART HISTORY	1936	1937	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
21	FREINER, BERTA	GERMANY	J	MEDICINE/NURSE	1940	1944	ISTANBUL	PALESTINE				1	
22	FREUNDLICH, FINDLAY	CH../GERM.	WJ	ASTRONOMY	1933	1937/1959	ISTANBUL	SCOTL./GERM.			1		
23	FUCHS, GEORGE	AUSTRIA	J	RADIOLOGY	1939	1942	ISTANBUL	PALESTINE				1	
24	GEIRINGER, HILDA	AUSTRIA	J	APPLIED MATH.	1934	1939	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
25	GERNGROSS, OTTO	GERMANY	J	CHEMISTRY	1933/1947	1943/D	ANKARA	PALES./D.1966					
26	GLEISBERG, WOLFGANG	GERMANY	J	ASTRONOMY	1934	1958	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
27	GOTTSCHALK, WALTER	GERMANY	J	LIBRARIAN	1941	1954	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
28	GROSS, PHILIP	AUSTRIA	J	CHEM. TECHN.	1936	1939	ISTANBUL	BRITAIN	1				
29	GUTERBROCK, HANS	GERMANY	J	ARCHEOLOGY	1936	1948	ANKARA	U.S.					1
30	HAUROWITZ, FELIX	CHECH.	J	BIOCHEMISTRY	1939	1948	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
31	HEILBRONN, ALFRED	GERMANY	J	BOTANIC	1933	1956	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
32	HELLMANN, KARL	GERMANY	J	MEDICINE	1936	1943	ISTANBUL	PALESTINE				1	
33	HERZOG, REGINALD	GERMANY	J	CHEMISTRY	1934	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1936		1			
34	HIRSCH, ERNST EDWARD	GERMANY	J	LAW	1933	1952	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
35	HIRSCH, JULIUS	GERMANY	J	HYGENIE	1933	1948	ISTANBUL	SWITZ.					
36	HOFFMANN, SUSAN	GERMANY	J	OPHTHALMOLOGY	1933	1956	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
37	HONIG, RICHARD	GERMANY	J	LAW HISTORY	1933	1939/1974	ISTANBUL	U.S./GERM.			1		
38	IGERSHEIMER, JOSEF	GERMANY	J	OPHTHALMOLOGY	1933	1939	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
39	ISAAC, ALFRED	GERMANY	J	ECONOMY	1937	1950	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
40	KANTOROWICZ, ALFRED	GERMANY	J	DENTISTRY	1933	1950	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
41	KRANZ, WALTHER	GERMANY	J	PHILOSOPHY	1942	1952	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
42	KRAUS, FRITZ	AUSTRIA	J	AECHEOL..	1937	1954	ISTANBUL	AUST./HOLL.					
43	LADEWIG, PETER	GERMANY	J	PATHOLOGY	1935	1946	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
44	LANSBERGER, BENNO	GERMANY	J	ASSYROLOGIE	1935	1948	ANKARA	U.S.					1
45	LAQUEUR, AUGUST	GERMANY	J	PHYS. THERAPY	1935	D	ANKARA	DIED/1954		1			
46	LAQUEUR, WERNER	CHECH.	J	PATHOLOGY	1936	1950	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
47	LEUCHTENBERGER, RUDOLF	GERMANY	J	INTERN. MEDICINE	1934	1936	ISTANBUL	PALEST./U.S.	1				
48	LIEPMANN, WILHELM	GERMANY	WJ	GYNECOLOGY	1933	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1939		1			
49	LIPSCHITZ, WERNER	GERMANY	J	BIOCHEMISTRY	1933	1939	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				

<u>NO</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>ARRIV. DATE</u>	<u>DEPART. DATE</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>POST WAR</u>	<u>T1</u>	<u>T2</u>	<u>T3</u>	<u>T4</u>	<u>T5</u>
50	LÖWENTHAL, KARL	GERMANY	J	EMBRYOLOGY	1933	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
51	MAGNUS-ALSLEBEN, ERNST	GERMANY	J	INTERN. MEDICINE	1935	D	ANKARA	DIED/1936		1			
52	MARCHIONINI, ALFRED	GERMANY	WJ	DERMATOLOGY	1938	1949	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
53	MARCHAND, HANS	GERMANY	J	PHILOLOGY	1934	1953/1957	ANKARA	U.S./GERM.			1		
54	MELCHIOR, EDUARD	GERMANY	J	SURGERY	1935	1954	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
55	MENDELSSOHN, THOMAS	GERMANY	J	PHYSICS	1933	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1942		1			
56	MEYER, MAX	GERMANY	J	MEDICINE	1935	1940/1947	ANKARA	IRAN/GERM.			1		
57	NEUMARK, FRITZ	GERMANY	J	ECONOMICS	1933	1951	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
58	NISSEN, RUDOLF	GERMANY	J	SURGERY	1933	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
59	OBENDORFER, SIEGFRIED	GERMANY	J	GENERAL PHSIOLOGY	1933	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1944		1			
60	OELSNER, GUSTAV	GERMANY	J	ARCHITECTURE	1937	1951	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
61	ORNSTEIN, WILHELM	GERMANY	J	MATHEMATICS	1939	1946	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
62	OTTENSTTEIN, BERTA	GERMANY	J	DERMATOLOGY	1935	1945	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
63	PETERS, WILHELM	GERMANY	J	PSYCHOLOGY	1937	1952	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
64	PFANNENSTEL, MAX	GERMANY	J	GEOL./LIBRARIAN	1938	1942	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
65	PRAGER, WILLIAM	GERMANY	J	APPLIED MATH.	1934	1941	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
66	PREAETORIUS, ERNST	GERMANY	WJ	MUSIC/CONDUCTOR	1935	D	ANKARA	DIED/1946		1			
67	PULEWKA, PAUL	GERMANY	WJ	PHARMACOLOGY	1935	1954	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
68	RABINOWITSCH, BRUNO	GERMANY	J	CHEMISTRY	1934	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
69	REICHENBACH, HANS	GERMANY	J	PHILOSOPHY	1933	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
70	REININGER, WALTER	AUSTRIA	J	RADIOLOGY	1938	1948	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
71	ROHDE, GEORG	GERMAN	WJ	PHILOLOGY	1935	1949	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
72	ROSENBERG, HANS	GERMAN	J	ASTRONOMY	1938	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1940		1			
73	ROSENBAUM, HARRY	GERMAN	J	PHYSIOLOGY	1935	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1949		1			
74	RUBEN, WALTER	GERMAN	J	INDIOLOGY	1935	1947	ANKARA	GERMANY			1		
75	SALOMON-CALVI, PETER	GERMANY	J	GEOLOGY	1934	D	ANKARA	DIED/1941		1			
76	SCHLOSSINGER, WALTER	GERMANY	J	MUSIC	1938	1946	ANKARA	U.S.					1
77	SCHNEE, LUDWIG	GERMANY	J	BOTANIC	1933	1938	ISTANBUL	VENEZ.	1				
78	SCHNEIDER, ERNST	GERMANY	WJ	BOTANIC	1934	1936	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
79	SCHOCKEN, WOLFGANG	GERMANY	J	VIOLONIST	1933	1934	ANKARA	PALESTINE	1				
80	SCHWARTZ, ANDREAS	HUNG./GERM	J	LAW	1934	D	ANKARA	DIED/1952		1			
81	SCHWARTZ, PHILIPP	GERMANY	J	PATHOLOGY	1933	1951	ISTANBUL	GERM./U.S.			1		
82	SGALITZER, MAX	AUSTRIA	J	RADIOLOGY	1938	1943	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
83	SPITZER, LEO	GERMANY	J	ROMAN./ PHILOL.	1933	1936	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				

NO	NAME	COUNTRY	ORIGIN	DISCIPLINE	ARRIV. DATE	DEPART. DATE	CITY	POST WAR	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
84	STEINITZ, KURT	POL./GERM.	J	CHEMISTRY	1934	1942	ISTANBUL	PALESTINE				1	
85	STRUPP, KARL	GERMANY	J	INTERNAT. LAW	1933	1935	ISTANBUL	FRANCE/U.S.	1				
86	SÜSSHEIM, KARL	GERMANY	J	ORIENTOLOGY	1939	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1947		1			
87	TAUT, BRUNO	GERMANY	J*	ARCHITECTURE	1936	D	ISTANBUL	DIED/1938		1			
88	TIETZE, ANDREAS	AUSTRIA	J	TURKOLOGY	1938	1958	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
89	UHLMANN, ERICH	AUSTRIA	J	RADIOLOGY	1934	1938	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
90	VON HIPPEL, ARTHUR	GERMAN	WJ	PHYSICS	1933	1934	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
91	VON MISES, RICHARD	GERMAN	J	APPLIED MATH.	1933	1939	ISTANBUL	U.S.	1				
92	WEISSGLASS, CARL	GERMAN	J	RADIOLOGY ENG.	1938	1950	ISTANBUL	U.S.					1
93	WINKLER, ADOLF	GERMAN	WJ	MUSIC	1935	1947	ANKARA	U.S.					1
94	WINTERSTEIN, HANS	CHECK	J	PHYSIOLOGY	1933	1956	ISTANBUL	GERMANY			1		
95	ZUCKMAYER, EDUARD	GERMAN	J	MUSIC	1936	D	ANKARA	DIED/1972					
<p>J: JEWISH ORIGIN WJ: JEWISH ORIGIN WIFE D:DIED</p>													
TOTAL									24	16	31	5	15

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARS ANALYZED	95
T1-WENT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY IN THE PRE-WAR PERIOD	24
T2-DIED DURING THEIR STAY IN TURKEY	16
T3-RETURNED TO GERMANY AFTER THE WAR	31
T4-OBLIGED TO LEAVE TURKEY DURING THE WAR	5
T5-WENT TO THE U.S. AFTER THE WAR	15

% SCHOLARS RETURNED TO GERMANY (TOTAL)⁷²³	39.24
% SCHOLARS RETURNED TO GERMANY (ACC. TO POST-WAR #S)⁷²⁴	58.00

⁷²³ This percentage includes the scholars who left Turkey before or during WWII.

⁷²⁴ This percentage shows only those scholars who were in Turkey at the end of WWII.

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF CONVOYS ORGANIZED FOR RETURN OF REGULAR TURKISH JEWS FROM FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR II

Table 2. CONVOYS ORGANIZED FOR RETURN OF REGULAR TURKISH JEWS FROM FRANCE DURING WORLD WAR II

No.	Depart. Date	From Occupied France	From Vichy France	Total
1 ¹	9/25/1942	37		37
2 ²	3/15/1943	121		121
3 ³	2/8/1944	61		61
4 ⁴	2/15/1944	33	19	52
5	unknown	54	3	57
6	unknown	41	4	45
7 ⁵	3/8/1944	45	13	58
8 ⁶	3/29/1944	47	3	50
9	5/16/1944	28	24	52
10	5/23/1944	5	34	39
	TOTAL1	472	100	572

Notes:

- ¹ According to the communication of Paris Consulate-General of November 16, 1942. See, SCC Doc. No. 128. In this convoy except one consulate officer all the passengers were regular Turkish Jewish citizens. Lazar Russo, 2011. Interview with I. I. Bahar. Istanbul, June 2.
- ² As two separate train cars. See, Guttstadt, "Really an Unbelievable Story", p. 59. The first car had 55 passengers the second 66.
- ³ For all convoys of 1944 see, SCC 178 and Shaw, *Turkey & the Holocaust*, p. 210.
- ⁴ According to the communication from Paris Consulate-General to Daryo Feldstajn, January 1, 1944. SCC Doc. No. 403
- ⁵ See the list of passengers at http://www.theturkishpassport.com/documents/Passenger_List_train_8_March_1944.pdf
- ⁶ According to two communications from Paris Consulate to the Embassy at Vichy, on April no convoys were organized. See SCC Doc. No. 162 & 164.
Shaw mentions that a convoy of 15 businessmen and their families left in June 1943.
- ⁷ No document confirms existence of this convoy. Shaw, *Turkey & Holocaust*, p. 149.

APPENDIX C

TABLES AND GRAPHS IN RELATION TO DEPORTATION OF JEWS OF TURKISH ORIGIN FROM FRANCE TO DEATH CAMPS. MARCH 1942 - JULY 1944

Table 3 TURKEY BORN DEPORTEES FROM FRANCE AND THEIR PERCENTAGE IN EACH CONVOY

Convoy #	Date	Tot. Deport.	Jews Born in Turkey						Total	%
			Istanbul	Izmir	Edirne	Bursa	Other			
1	3/27/1942	1112	8	7		1	2	18	1.62	
2	6/5/1942	1000	4	1		1	1	7	0.70	
3	6/22/1942	1000	44	20	4	1	4	73	7.30	
4	6/25/1942	999	1					1	0.10	
5	6/28/1942	1038	1					1	0.10	
6	7/17/1942	928	1		2			3	0.32	
7	7/19/1942	999	7	1	1			9	0.90	
8	7/20/1942	827	8	2	1			11	1.33	
9	7/22/1942	996	3					3	0.30	
10	7/24/1942	1000	0					0	0.00	
11	7/27/1942	1000	1					1	0.10	
12	7/29/1942	1001	4	1	2			7	0.70	
13	7/31/1942	1049	2					2	0.19	
14	8/3/1942	1034	0					0	0.00	
15	8/5/1942	1014	3					3	0.30	
16	8/7/1942	1069	1					1	0.09	
17	8/10/1942	1006	0					0	0.00	
18	8/12/1942	1007	0					0	0.00	
19	8/14/1942	991		1				1	0.10	
20	8/7/1942	1000	3					3	0.30	
21	8/19/1942	1000	3					3	0.30	
22	8/21/1942	1000	7	3				10	1.00	
23	8/24/1942	1000	21	6	2	2	2	33	3.30	

Convoy #	Date	Tot. Deport.	Jews Born in Turkey						
			Istanbul	Izmir	Edirne	Bursa	Other	Total	%
24	8/26/1942	1002	2	1				3	0.30
25	8/28/1942	1000	2	1	5			8	0.80
26	8/31/1942	1000	2	1				3	0.30
27	9/2/1942	1000	1					1	0.10
28	9/4/1942	1013	0					0	0.00
29	9/7/1942	1000	0					0	0.00
30	9/9/1942	1000	0					0	0.00
31	9/11/1942	1000	1	1			1	3	0.30
32	9/14/1942	1000	52	11	4	1	5	73	7.30
33	9/16/1942	1003	14	3				17	1.69
34	9/18/1942	1000	49	7	2		1	59	5.90
35	9/21/1942	1000	30	4		1		35	3.50
36	9/23/1942	1000	12	5	3	1	2	23	2.30
37	9/25/1942	1004	2					2	0.20
38	9/28/1942	904	8	1			1	10	1.11
39	9/30/1942	210		2	2			4	1.90
40	11/3/1942	1000	10	1				11	1.10
42	11/6/1942	1000	5	1	1		1	8	0.80
44	11/9/1942	1000	22	4	5	1	2	34	3.40
45	11/11/1942	745	11	4	1		1	16	2.15
46	2/9/1943	1000	18	1	3			22	2.20
47	2/11/1943	998	26	14	1	2	2	45	4.51
48	2/13/1943	1000	14	3		1		18	1.80
49	3/2/1943	1000	4					4	0.40
50	3/4/1943	1003	1	1				2	0.20
51	3/6/1943	998	0					0	0.00
52	3/23/1943	994	30	10	4	2		46	4.63
53	3/25/1943	1008	16					16	1.59
55	6/25/1943	1018	17	7	2	1		27	2.65
57	7/18/1943	1000	7		2		1	10	1.00
58	7/31/1943	1000	11	1	1	1		14	1.40
59	9/2/1943	1000	11	1	1			13	1.30
60	10/7/1943	1000	25	4	3			32	3.20
61	10/28/1943	1000	27	9	2	2		40	4.00
62	11/20/1943	1200	16	3				19	1.58
63	12/17/1943	850	17	2	1	2		22	2.59
64	12/7/1943	1000	10	4	1			15	1.50
66	1/20/1944	1155	60	7	8	8	6	89	7.71
67	2/3/1944	1214	30	10	3	1	4	48	3.95

Convoy #	Date	Tot. Depart.	Jews Born in Turkey							
			Istanbul	Izmir	Edirne	Bursa	Other	Total	%	
68	2/10/1944	1500	23	9			1	33	2.2	
69	3/7/1944	1501	35	6	3		1	45	3.00	
70	3/27/1944	1000	39	12	5		1	57	5.70	
71	4/13/1944	1500	13	6	2		1	22	1.47	
72	4/29/1944	1004	16	7	5		2	30	2.99	
73	5/15/1944	878	37	7	4			48	5.47	
74	5/20/1944	1200	86	26	4	3	5	124	10.33	
75	5/30/1944	1000	29	3	1			33	3.30	
76	6/30/1944	1100	51	11	1	3	3	69	6.27	
77	7/31/1944	1300	59	8	2		2	71	5.46	
TOTAL		73372						1515		

Figure 1. NUMBER OF DEPORTEES BETWEEN MARCH 1942 AND JULY 1944

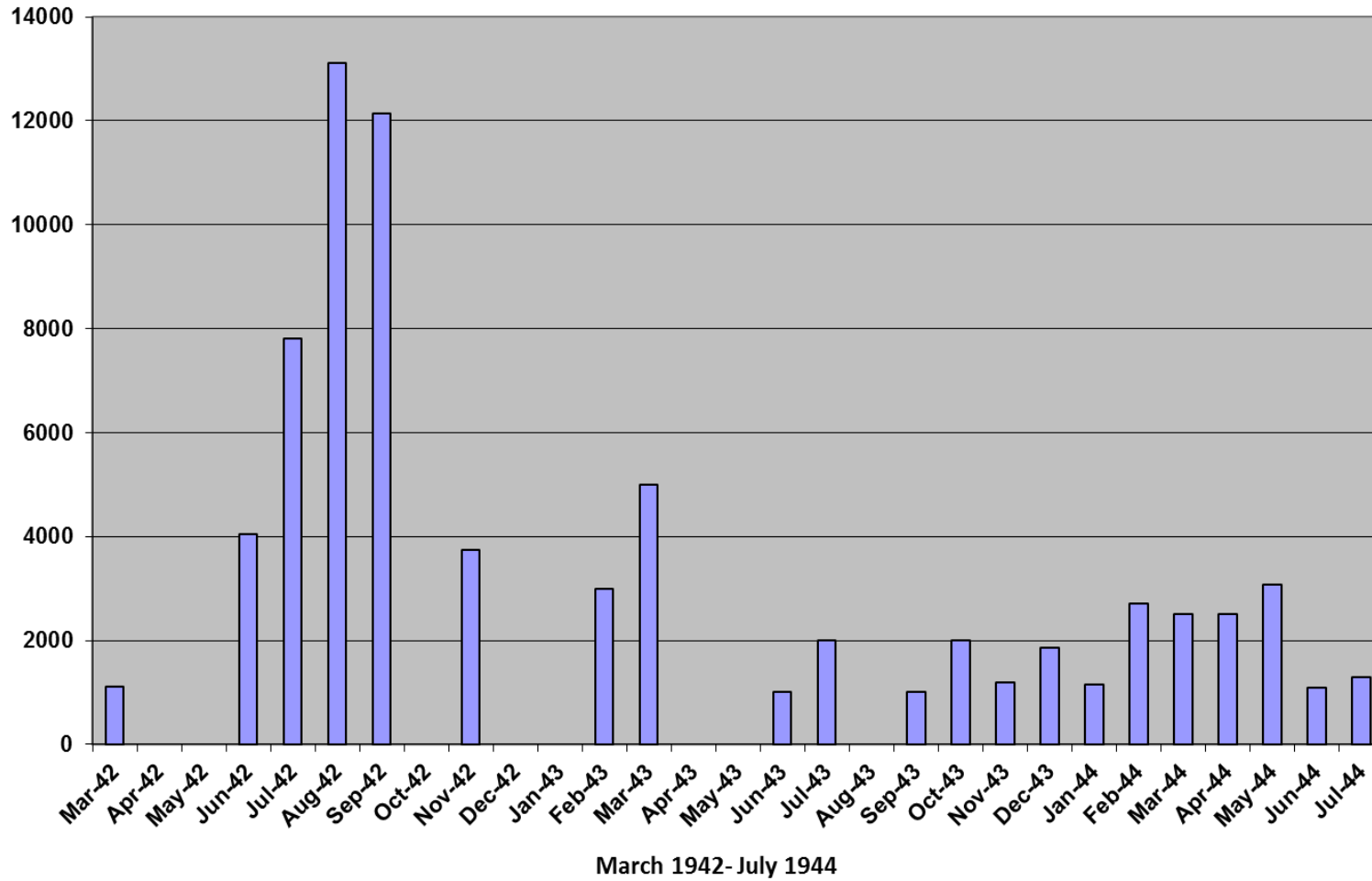


Table 4. DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM FRANCE (MONTHLY BASE)

<u>MONTHS</u>	<u>TOT. DEPORT.</u>	<u>BORN IN TURKEY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Mar-42	1112	18	1.62
Apr-42	0		
May-42	0		
Jun-42	4037	82	2.03
Jul-42	7800	36	0.46
Aug-42	13123	68	0.52
Sep-42	12134	227	1.87
Oct-42	0		
Nov-42	3745	69	1.84
Dec-42	0		
Jan-43	0		
Feb-43	2998	85	2.84
Mar-43	5003	68	1.36
Apr-43	0		
May-43	0		
Jun-43	1018	27	2.68
Jul-43	2000	24	1.20
Aug-43	0		
Sep-43	1000	13	1.30
Oct-43	2000	72	3.6
Nov-43	1200	19	1.58
Dec-43	1850	37	2
Jan-44	1155	89	7.71
Feb-44	2714	81	2.98
Mar-44	2501	102	4.08
Apr-44	2504	52	2.08
May-44	3078	205	6.66
Jun-44	1100	69	6.27
Jul-44	1300	71	5.46
TOT./AVER.	73372	1514	2.06

Figure 2. PERCENTAGE OF TURKEY BORN DEPORTEES

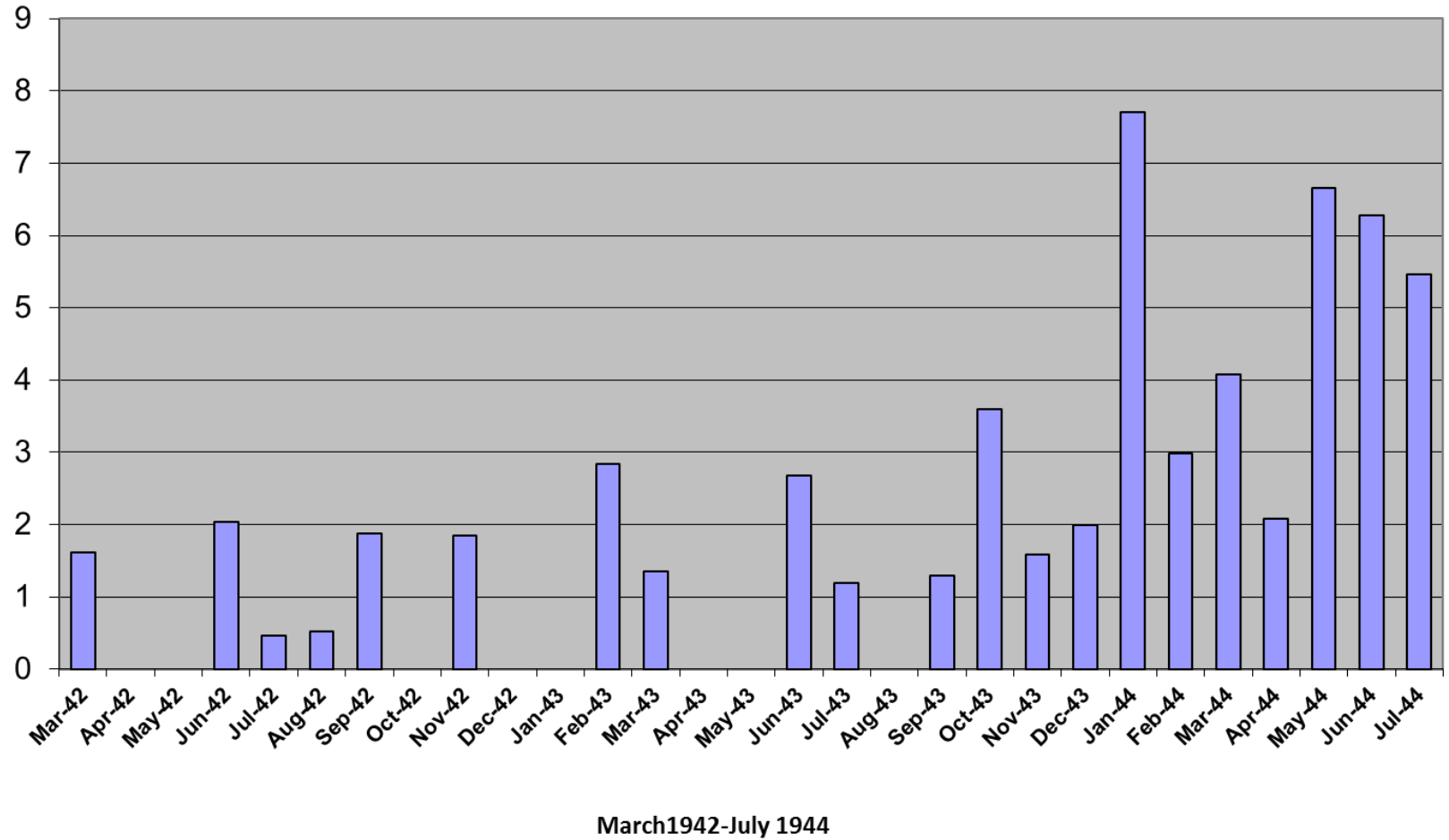


Table 5. DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM FRANCE (MONTHLY BASE)

MONTHS	TOT. DEPORT.		BORN IN TURKEY	
	#	% TO TOT. DEPORT.	#	% TO TOT. DEPORT.
Mar-42	1112	1.52	18	1.19
Apr-42	0	0.00		0.00
May-42	0	0.00		0.00
Jun-42	4037	5.50	82	5.42
Jul-42	7800	10.63	36	2.38
Aug-42	13123	17.89	68	4.49
Sep-42	12134	16.54	227	14.99
Oct-42	0	0.00		0.00
Nov-42	3745	5.10	69	4.56
Dec-42	0	0.00		0.00
Jan-43	0	0.00		0.00
Feb-43	2998	4.09	85	5.61
Mar-43	5003	6.82	68	4.49
Apr-43	0	0.00		0.00
May-43	0	0.00		0.00
Jun-43	1018	1.39	27	1.78
Jul-43	2000	2.73	24	1.59
Aug-43	0	0.00		0.00
Sep-43	1000	1.36	13	0.86
Oct-43	2000	2.73	72	4.76
Nov-43	1200	1.64	19	1.25
Dec-43	1850	2.52	37	2.44
Jan-44	1155	1.57	89	5.88
Feb-44	2714	3.70	81	5.35
Mar-44	2501	3.41	102	6.74
Apr-44	2504	3.41	52	3.43
May-44	3078	4.20	205	13.54
Jun-44	1100	1.50	69	4.56
Jul-44	1300	1.77	71	4.69
TOT./AVER.	73372		1514	2.06

Figure 3. COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AND TURKEY BORN JEWS (MONTHLY BASE)

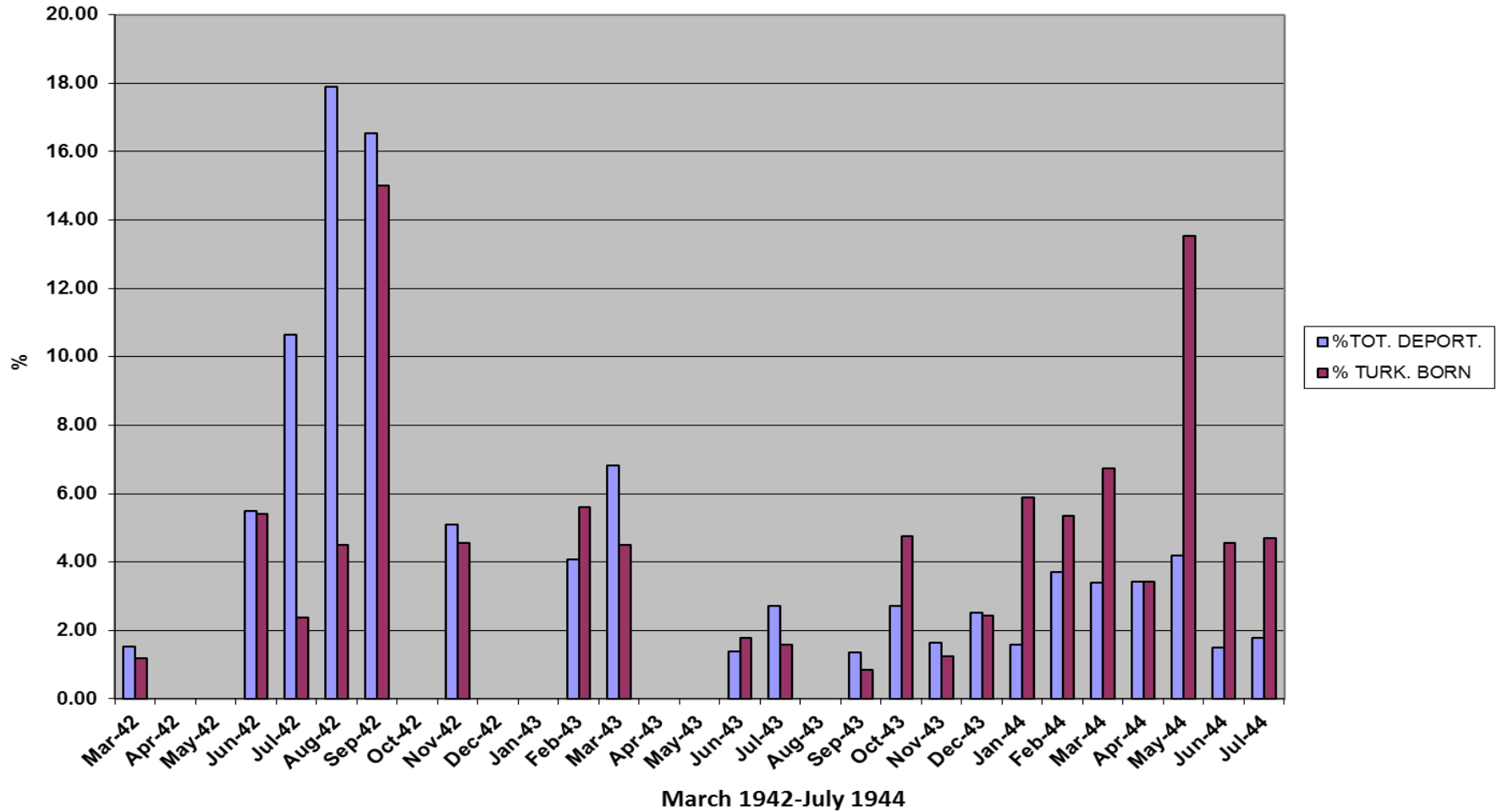
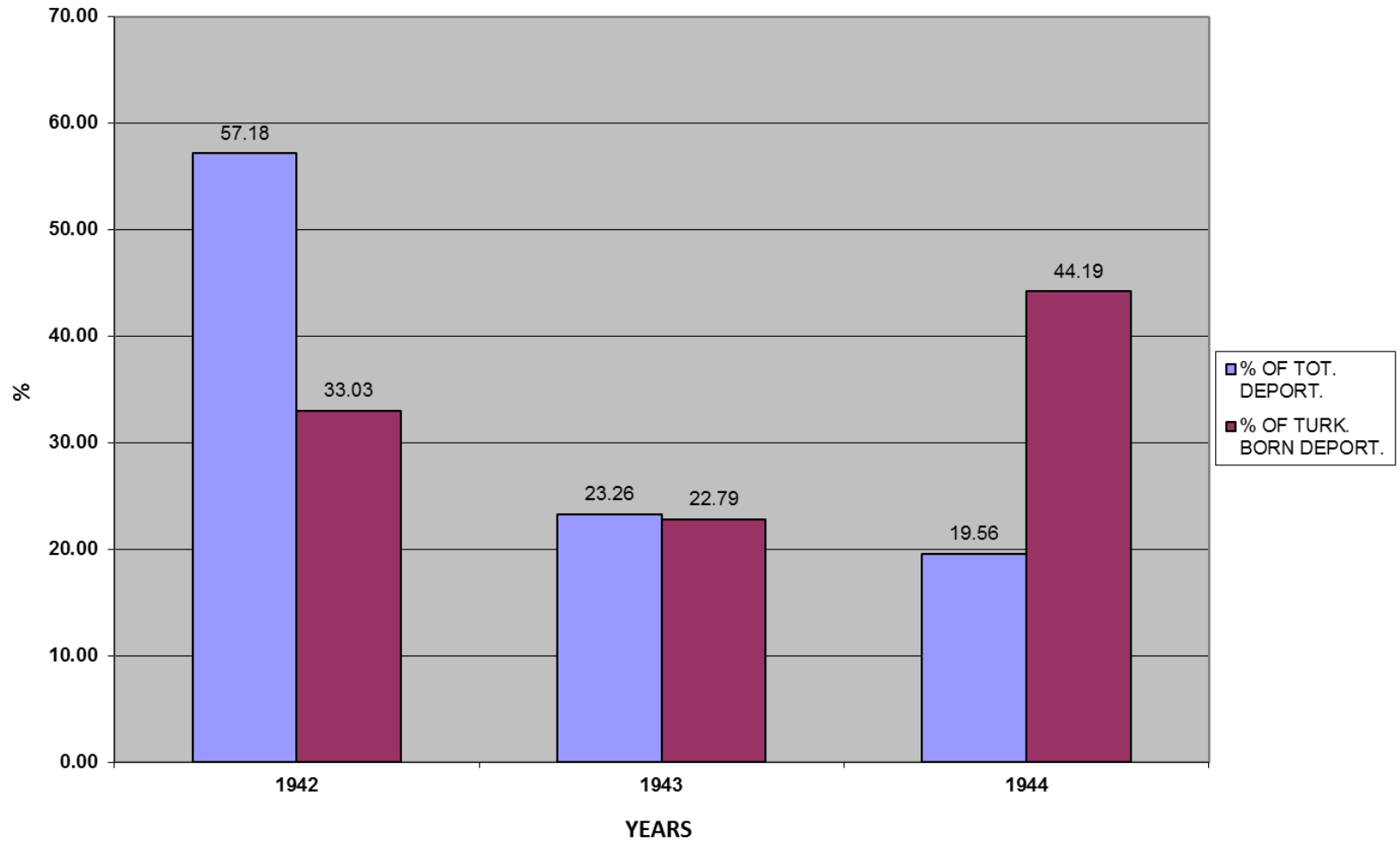


Table 6. DEPORTATION OF JEWS FROM FRANCE (YEARLY BASE)

	TOT # OF CONVOY S	%	TOTAL DEPORTATION S	%	DEPORTED JEWS BORN IN TURKEY	%	% TO TOT. DEPORT.	INCREAS E % W.R.T. 1942	INCREAS E % W.R.T. 1943
1942	45	58.44	41951	57.18	500	33.03	1.19		
1943	17	22.08	17069	23.26	345	22.79	2.02	69.58	
1944	12	15.58	14352	19.56	669	44.19	4.66	291.10	130.62
TOTAL	77		73372		1514				

Figure 4. COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL AND TURKEY BORN JEWS



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S6 Jewish Agency Immigration Department, Jerusalem

S25 Jewish Agency Political Department, Jerusalem

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